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# MEMOIRS

OF

## AN UNFORTUNATE SON OF THESPIS;

BEING

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

# EDWARD CAPE EVERARD,

COMEDIAN,

TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF THE THEATRE-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE, LONDON, AND PUPIL OF THE
LATE DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

WITH

## REFLECTIONS, REMARKS, AND ANECDOTES,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

---

"Hard is his fate, whom evil stars have led,
To seek in scenic art precarious bread!"

Mrs CHARLOTTE SMITH.

---

EDINBURGH:

*Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.*

TO BE HAD OF MOST OF THE BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS,
AND
OF E. EVERARD, 2, LITTLE KING STREET.

1818.

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ROSEBERY
DURDANS

# DEDICATION,

TO

# THE PUBLIC.

"Words would but wrong the gratitude I owe you."
OTWAY.

HAVING very just reason to fear that my application to any person of consequence for permission to dedicate this matter to would be of no avail; as I apprehend that I should not obtain the honour of a *Name*, to patronise such a trifle, I beg leave to dedicate it to the *Public at large*.

From my infant state till now, "my life has been employed in little else" than endeavouring to amuse them, and "to sooth the hour of care." The Public in England, Scotland, and Wales, have had the years of my childhood, boyhood, manhood,—my youth, my health, and strength. The Public, in return, have kindly supported me, and at some times, and in some places, very

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liberally; to whom, then, can I so properly address or dedicate the following pages, as the considerate, candid, generous Public?

Already I find a heartfelt advantage to me results from addressing "Everybody," instead of "Somebody;" for now, fearlessly, I may return the grateful feelings of my mind, without being suspected of the meanness of flattery to "Anybody;" and as no individual can take upon himself to say, "I am the Public," I trust I may thank *them*, and give offence to "Nobody."

The fear of thus displeasing has prevented me from relieving my mind in grateful strains, by mentioning the names of many persons of the first respectability in Edinburgh and Leith, to whose kindness I am infinitely indebted. I am now upon the spot, and will not, therefore, run the risk of offending their delicacy, by selecting and particularizing the benevolence of any one. Let me assure them, that their names are stamped on a plate, which nothing but death can destroy.

I have, it is true, been less scrupulous in this respect with regard to my friends and patrons in the south; I have more freely and boldly paid my little tribute of gratitude to a few of them, and ventured to mention some of *their* names;

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but it is because that I am at this instant many miles from them, and 'tis a very great chance indeed if ever I see one of them again; but if that event *should* happen, I persuade myself that they will kindly excuse the liberty, and impute it to the real cause, and not to any designing motive.

I now indeed should offer something concerning this little Book;—*indeed I should.* The celebrated Colley Cibber, who was in the *very* old Drury Theatre manager, author, a first-rate actor, and arrived at the dignity of poet laureat; who was intimate with the first authors and wits of the age, well informed, well furnished with innumerable pleasing and even instructive remarks and anecdotes that came under his own eye, and within his own own immediate knowledge, which fully enabled him to give "A Complete History of the Stage; or, An Apology for his own Life." When, I say, a man of such information, abilities, and learning, modestly conceived that even *his* life needed some apology for obtruding himself on the public, what should *I* now make for mine. Mine! which is "not the twentieth part the tithe of his." Were I to speak agreeably to my feelings, "My heart's so full, that I should talk of nothing else all day." My apology would

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fill more pages than the book itself; my prologue be longer than the play; I will confine it then to *one word,* an imperious word—*Necessity.* With my generous readers, *that* word, I know, will be deemed a very *sufficient* apology; and I am under no apprehension from the real, well-qualified, gentleman *critic,* conscious that he will remember the dignity of his character, and not stoop to meddle with *me;* I am my own biographer, and below his notice.

I have herein frequently made use of quotations, just as they happened to occur and strike me; as they are nine out of ten theatrical ones, as most of them "smell of the shop," I hope, in a work of this kind, "It is all in character." And if three or four have impertinently forced themselves on me in this Dedication, I trust it will not be thought I have treated it too lightly on that account, and be wanting in due respect.

The puns and quibbles to be found in our old dramatic authors, and more especially in our immortal Shakespeare, are innumerable; yet these, and even his frequent tautology too, and in his best tragedies, have, I believe, oftener been admired than censured. For instance,



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" Nurse. *Shame* come to Romeo!
*Juliet.* He was not born to *shame*;
Upon his brow, *shame* is *ashamed* to sit."

The great and Reverend Dr Young likewise uses one word four times in two lines of his Night Thoughts,

" Thy shaft flew *thrice*, and *thrice* my peace was slain,
And *thrice*, ere *thrice* yon moon had fill'd her horns."

Where I have taken the freedom to adopt any thing of this kind, designedly or inadvertently, (and I wish the difference may be perceived,) give me leave to think that this will be allowed for. Above all, I must request your forgiveness, if, after my best attention, any matter should chance to be twice glanced at, or nearly repeated. If my indulgent reader knew half the disadvantageous circumstances that, in the course of this, I have laboured under, I am confident it would be freely granted.

Now, I am about finishing where my kind reader will most probably begin, my Dedication; and having now reviewed my work, as well as my time and awkward circumstances would permit, I find it so trifling and insignificant, so far below my wishes, that, in spite of all my boasted confidence in the kindness and good-nature of the Public, maugre all my utmost endeavours to

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the contrary, yet "I feel I fear!" and still upon that clemency and good-nature I must rest my hopes and rely. "Brevity is the soul of wit;" I am guiltless of both; to avoid one whirlpool I have been nearly drawn into the other; I have "tired you with apologies for being tiresome;" and after declaring that the same should consist in "one word," have used above three hundred; so, with your leave, I will make no more words about it. But, as from my infancy I have been an humble servant of the Public, so I still remain, and beg leave, with the utmost respect, to subscribe myself

Their much obliged,

And truly grateful debtor,

EDWARD EVERARD.

Edinburgh, July 27, 1818.

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# SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

# EDWARD CAPE EVERARD.

As it may prove a little satisfactory to the kind and indulgent readers who condescend to peruse and patronize this humble matter, I shall beg leave to begin it from my humble origin.

My father, Edward Everard, was an under steward, or baillie, in the service of a Governor Stevenson, living near Edmonton, about eight miles from Whitechapel, London; my mother (Ann Sowerby,) as housekeeper, in the same family. They married there, and by advice entered upon a house called then the Hare and Hounds Inn, now (I believe) the White Hart, at Tottenham High Cross, on the same road, about five miles from London. I was born there on February 3d, 1755. My father, unhappily for me! died the same year, December 9th, aged only 27. Although so young, he was called by all the place and neighbourhood, Father Everard, he was so much respected and beloved.—His remains are in the church-yard adjoining, with these two simple lines upon the tomb-stone, as if addressed by my mother:—

"You were too good to live on earth with me,
And I not good enough to die with thee!"



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About three years since, my younger brother, John Everard, many years an oil and colour-man, No. 19, Houndsditch, London, took his last earthly residence *there*. Allow me here to say, that for integrity, industry, an assistant to the poor, and a most friendly neighbour, there was scarcely a citizen of London more respected; his wife was likewise buried there about fourteen years since, and a young son of his many years ago; his eldest son, my nephew, many years at the great school at Hackney, then at Eton and Oxford, is now the Rev. Edward Everard, in Kent. After my dear father's death, my mother went to Carlisle, her native place, where my brother was brought up, and where she died. I was taken to London under the care of my godfather, Mr Cape, a native of Durham, and a relation of my mother's; he had a house in the Little Piazza, Covent-Garden, (many years since burnt down), and had a Mr Holland, Mr Joseph Austin, and Mr Michael Atkins, who lodged with him; the last mentioned was afterwards manager of the theatre, Belfast, and other towns in Ireland; he was very fond of me, and was the first who taught me, what I then called dancing. Mr Joseph Austin, afterwards manager of the Chester, and other theatres, took me in his hand one morning to old Drury-Lane Theatre. I was not then four years of age; Garrick was on the stage, and accosted him with, "Hey! what! hey! Austin!—what little thing have you got there? hey! what! hey!—is that one of yours?" "No, Sir," says Austin, "its my landlord's, Mr Cape's.—Grimaldi, (who was then ballat-master there, and the father of the present eminent clown,) says, he is terribly distressed for fairies and Lilliputians, and I thought I'd bring

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him one."—"Well," replied Garrick, "you *have* brought a fairy indeed!—And what can you do, my little man?" says he to me.—"Oh, Sir," said I, "I can dance a hornpipe." Garrick, surprised, "Ay, indeed, my little fellow," says he, "pray let's see you."—Accordingly, I began and shuffled as well as I could, which pleased him so highly that he gave me, I think, half a crown, and took a fancy to me, I believe, immediately. I made my humble appearance soon after with a vast number of others, but I was the youngest of all, and the least of all the little ones; and, as I remember well, the very first night, in forming a large fairy-ring, they hauled me so, that I fell *down* upon the stage; it proved a bad omen, for never since, have I been able to *rise* on it!

However, the next season I was properly taught a hornpipe by Mr John Walker, who was tutor to the famous Nancy Dawson. I danced above fifty nights that season—was much noticed by King George the Second—greatly favoured by many of the nobility; but being so young, and withal so very little of my age, the gallery people, from their distance, used to think me a puppet! The next year, I may say, I commenced actor, having a principal fairy part, called *Puck, or Robin Good-fellow*, in Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," in which the children were so highly noticed and applauded by the town, particularly Master Raworth, Miss Rogers, Miss Ford, and Miss Wright, (afterwards well known as the celebrated Mrs Arne) that the first ladies and gentlemen of the theatre concerned in the piece were hissed, which disapprobation nightly increasing, they one and all absolutely refused to perform in it any longer; in consequence

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of which, Garrick reduced it to a farce, called the "Fairy Tale," which was afterwards frequently played with wonderful success, to a full and elegant house. About this time the theatres and all public places were shut, in consequence of the sudden death of King George the Second, after which, Garrick wrote a little interlude called the "Farmer's Return from London," partly out of compliment to his present Majesty, and in order to introduce the grand pageant of the Coronation. When giving a ludicrous description of the same, he concluded it by saying, with great energy, "I hope from my soul I shall ne'er see another!" which line of course was then warmly applauded. Indeed this little piece was so much spoken of, that Signior Zoffani, from Italy, took a likeness of Mr Garrick in the *Farmer*, Mrs Bradshaw and myself, as his wife and son, all full length, and the piece is now in the possession of their Majesties. In this year, too, Garrick performed, in the "Second Part of King Henry Fourth," the character of *Henry*: I represented *Thomas, Duke of Clarence*, his youngest son. After the first rehearsal of which, he called me into the Great Green Room; Mrs Pritchard, Mrs Yates, and many others, the first performers there. He told me that I spoke the part extremely well, only one line he wished me to give with a little more feeling; I said "Oh yes, sir, I intend to do so at night." He caught at my expression as if lightning had shot athwart him!—"At night," says he, "why, can you speak or play better at *night* than in the *morning*?" His expressive eyes darting through me, with some hesitation, I answered, "Yes, sir, I think when I am dressed for the part, and the audience before me, and every one seems to be in earnest, I think I

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can." He quickly replied "Then, sir, you are no actor! I suppose, too, you could give Romeo's, or Jaffier's speech, of

"Oh, woman, woman, lovely, charming woman!"

with more softness and feeling if you addressed it to Mrs Yates there, than you could to this marble slab?" Mrs Yates was very fond of me in my "boyish days," she kindly looked on me, I at her, and then at the cold marble, and could not help sighing out, "Yes, sir, Mrs Yates!"—She caught me in her arms! But Garrick, although perhaps not inwardly displeased, repeated, "Then, you are no actor! If you cannot give a speech, or make love to a table, chair, or marble, as well as to the finest woman in the world, you are not, nor ever will be a great actor!" This made a deep impression on my mind; I remember to have heard it said, that Garrick, (as an actor,) had no *feeling;* how wonderful then must be his art and powers? While I attempt to give my humble opinion of him, in this respect, (*feeling*,) I know that I tread upon ticklish and dangerous ground, and yet not much so to *me*, nor can I, if I would, injure his fame as an *actor*, or as a *man*, or add another leaf to, or take one from his departed brows!—Allow me then to speak of him as an actor. I agree with those *in part*, who declared him void of feeling: I think indeed that the last anecdote respecting myself, was nearly a proof of it. I remember a great tragedian, Powell, whose name I shall have occasion again to mention, performing the part of Jaffier, and when he said,

"I have not wrong'd thee—by these tears I have not."

His feelings were so great that they choaked his

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utterance, his articulation was lost, his face was drowned in tears.—The audience from these causes, not understanding what he said, the effect was of course lost. When Garrick, in the same part, spoke the same line, every eye in the house dropt a tear! If he did not feel himself, he made every body else feel. If a man could be an actor without feeling, I think it could be none but Garrick!—A man not having an ear to music, might as well be supposed to be the first scientific musician in the world! Shakespeare says, "There nature was above art!" With respect to Garrick, if it is true that he had no feeling as an actor, there then, "Art was above nature." Of this, however, I may have occasion again to treat. Soon after this, in compliment to Mrs Garrick, a lady of Italian birth, he made a tour with her, and went to Italy; having previously engaged a Mr Powell to perform most of his characters and supply his place in tragedy. They had no doubt of his succeeding, and indeed the event proved that he *did*, beyond the manager's most sanguine expectations. Mr Colman revised and altered the dormant tragedy of "Philaster" for him, in which part he made his first appearance, and also wrote an occasional prologue for him: Mr Powell had been a clerk to Sir Robert Ladbroke; a part of the prologue alludes to this:—

> "To-night, as yet by public eyes unseen,
> A raw, unpractic'd novice fills the scene;
> Bred in the city; his theatric star,
> Brings him at length on *this* side Temple-bar;
> Smit with the muse, the ledger he forgot,
> 'And when he wrote his name, he made a blot!'"

His wonderful but deserved success was such, that he performed, I think, no less than eighteen capital



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characters that season, and repeated most of them several times to overflowing houses, such a thing as no performer, before or since, I believe, could ever boast of. He soon after became part-manager of the Bristol Theatre, then near a place called by it Jacob's Wells; the picked flowers in the dramatic line from the London Theatres were there, and yet (with pain I speak it) they were obliged, like the lowest strollers that ever disgraced a barn, to announce at the top of their bills,—

"This evening will be performed at Jacob's Wells Theatre a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music. Boxes, 3s. Pit, 2s. Gallery, 1s. Between the parts will be rehearsed, Gratis, the tragedy of ALEXANDER THE GREAT, Alexander by Mr Powell, Clytus by Mr Clarke, &c."

I persuade myself that the magistrates, and the first people of Bristol, as well as the first actors of the day, thought this bill, as indeed it was, a disgrace to the city and all; for the next summer, they built a new theatre in King's-street, and obtained a patent for it, ever since styled the "Theatre Royal Bristol." —I went down to Bristol with Mr Powell the last season of Jacob's Wells Theatre. I lodged and boarded with him, which he made no charge of: I was to be allowed to sell five pounds worth of tickets by way of benefit; and if I should bring in more, half was to go to the managers: I had sold nearly twenty pounds—they deducted nothing—I had all— and by Mr Powell's generosity and introduction to the worthy Edgar family and others, many tickets were sold at half a guinea and a guinea each; so that my salary, for the whole summer, my benefit too, was all clear, besides many valuable presents, without any thing to pay even for my journey to Bristol and back.

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My next summer to Bristol Theatre Royal was not so productive to me, owing to the imprudence of my godfather, Cape; he would needs go with me down to Bristol, and destroyed every hope. I will here (not from any vain motive, but in regard to Mr Powell's wonderful feelings,) mention a circumstance which occurred here. The first night they played the tragedy of "King John," he performed *Faulconbridge*, the bastard, a character all fire and spirit; I personated *Prince Arthur*; my principal scene was in the 4th act, where, by order of King John, Hubert was to put out my eyes; the apparatus for which cruel operation, the red-hot irons, &c. are brought by his miscreants on the stage; Powell, the first night, stood by the side during all this scene, and when I came off, he caught me up in his arms, exclaiming "My dear boy, I did not think it was in you—this beats all!" His attention, however, to me knock'd him up entirely for the short remainder of the play, for he was so overcome and dispirited that he could not recover himself in the 5th act, and never in future came near the stage all that scene. Miss Hannah More too, who then kept a great boarding school in College Green, fainted, and was carried out of the house! If there is a tincture of vanity in this, let me hope you will allow for it, and give me full credit, where I may hereafter condemn myself.

The year after, Powell had an opportunity of entering into the management of Covent-Garden Theatre, conjointly with Messrs Harris, Rutherford, and Colman; he could not refrain from seizing this, although his articles to Lacy and Garrick, managers of Drury-Lane, wanted one year of expiration, and the breach whereof cost him a thousand pounds,

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He opened there in the part of *George Barnwell*, yet one morning at Bristol, only rehearsing it, his feelings so overcame and distressed him, that he declared he never would play the part again. The worthy Dr Goldsmith wrote the comedy and character of *Mr Honeywood*, the "Good-natured Man," purposely for him; and indeed he *was* the good natured man—good natured to a fault; for he could not but promise to grant any favour that might be asked him, although at the very moment he knew it was extravagant, and totally out of his power! This failing caused him frequently much trouble and censure. The latter end of Covent-Garden season, when scarcely any of the first-rate actors would play in the month of May, for the door-keepers' benefits, he performed every night in the week for them such arduous and fatiguing parts as *Alexander*, *Romeo*, *Jaffier*, *Othello*, *Orestes*, and *King Lear*;—these great exertions, with those he immediately after made at Bristol, the company of the first families there, whose kind solicitations and hospitality he had no power to resist; where, if possible, he was more courted and beloved than even in London; all these brought on a violent fever, and in a state of delirium, in July, 1769, at Bristol, he departed!

His house in King-street was opposite to the theatre, he died in the evening during the play. The melancholy intelligence soon reached it;—all the performers went on the stage in tears, confused and not knowing what they were about, the cause of which soon found its way into the front of the house, when immediately the whole audience, the boxes, pit, and gallery, with one accord, rose and left the house and the unfinished performance in deep and silent grief, except a few whose sobs and sighs

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they could not possibly restrain. The theatre was entirely shut till after his lamented funeral, and I may say all Bristol was in mourning.

About this time, their Royal Highnesses the Prince Regent and the Duke of York were allowed to honour the late Duke and Duchess of Ancaster with their first public visit; an additional band of music was engaged on the occasion from Drury-Lane Theatre; three children also to dance before them, Miss Collett, Miss Giorgi, and myself. We were two months preparing and practising for it; they went in Spanish characters, and I as a sailor; the first was the dancing-master's prentice, the second his daughter. There can be no doubt but that he himself, for his trouble, the children undoubtedly, the musicians, and all concerned were most liberally rewarded; but from some chicanery, I never had the smallest remuneration. Their dancing master, (not mine, for I was at that time pupil of Signior Noverre,) he and us three went to Ancaster House, dressed, in a hackney-coach; after our tea and coffee, we were conducted up, where from an adjacent room, we saw their Royal Highnesses at dinner, every dish was placed upon the table by the Duke and Duchess themselves, who stood up all the time and attended them; after which, we were shewn into an elegant apartment, where, with the musicians, we waited for the royal visitants; they were seated on a sopha, all else standing. We performed our dance twice over; we then went to dinner by ourselves, or rather supper, for I think 'twas about 10 o'clock. During this, the royal pair were amusing themselves at the desert table, they then departed with the band playing "God save the King!" After this, the Duke sent for us into the desert room, desiring us to take from

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it whatever might please our fancy; the two young ladies took soon enough to fill our hackney-coach; observing I had not any thing, his Grace kindly took me by the hand, saying, "My little friend, you seem shy, pray, take something." With diffidence, at last, I took a lamb, not, I suppose, above an ounce weight. "Well," said his Grace, "this is an emblem of your innocence; but a sailor should be bolder; come, take this from me," giving me a ship, three feet high, adding, "'Tis a first rate, I assure you, and I believe a very fast sailer." I believe indeed, she was, for she sailed so fast away, that I saw no more of her. However, I remember the night with pleasure, and am very perfectly satisfied with the honour of it.

The winter before this, Garrick returned from Italy, possibly sooner than he at first intended, in consequence of Powell's going so unexpectedly to Covent-Garden Theatre. He opened, or made a fresh debut in old Drury-Lane house, by command of their Majesties, in the character of *Benedick* in Shakespeare's "Much Ado about Nothing." He wrote and spoke a prologue on the occasion, in which he said,

> "Lest *Benedick* should suffer by my fear,
> Before he enters, I myself am here!"

After which, in the same, he said,

> "'Tis twice *twelve years since first the stage I trod!*

It is now nearly *five* times twelve years since first the stage *I* trod: but so be it;—"Nature took Shakespeare by the hand," "Fortune took Garrick by the hand," and her eldest daughter "*Miss* Fortune has condescended to take *me.*"

This prologue reminds me that, from 7 years of age, I had the honour of teaching dancing to some

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of the first families in London, because indeed the children would not be taught by their masters, but by me. I particularly remember the Lord Campden's, and Pratt's, a daughter of Mr Justice Wilmots, and Mr Edward and Mr William, the sons of Mr Justice Wills, in Lincoln's Inn Square, London; I attended the two latter gentlemen occasionally, for above ten years. The last mentioned gentleman is now, and has been for many years, the Rev. Mr William Willes, of Cirencester. Chance led me there; I sent up my name, he had then a great company with him at dinner, but he came to me. "Do you remember," says he, "among other things, a prologue you taught us to recite? how did it begin?" I replied, "'Twas Garrick's prologue to Much Ado—

> "With doubt, joy, apprehension, almost dumb,
> Once more before this awful court I come!"

"That's enough," he replied, "you are the person." Under his patronage, and by permission of Earl Bathurst, I gave my recitations in the Assembly-room there, and was behaved to most liberally.

In the summer of 1769, Garrick had the famous Stratford on Avon Jubilee in honour of Shakespeare, being the place of his nativity. He wrote and spoke his much admired Ode, in which were charming songs and grand choruses; there were also serious and whimsical dialogues in the amphitheatre, all in honour of Shakespeare, one of which had likely to have proved serious. Mr King, that deservedly admired comedian and worthy man, had a preconcerted matter to do. King was in the front of the house as one of the audience; after an eulogium of Garrick's, King had the unpleasant task imposed upon him to ridicule Shakepeare and his works; the company, except a

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few, not knowing him, and far from thinking that this was a planned and studied business, were irritated, and at length were on the point of handling King so roughly, that Garrick found himself compelled to whisper the secret to the audience; this matter in a minute spread round the circle, and they immediately entered into the merits of it, and loudly applauded. Every day, while this Jubilee continued, a grand pageant, or procession, walked of all Shakespeare's plays, tragedies, and comedies, with most of the principal characters in each, and not only those, but witches, fairies, monsters, and all the sprites or hobgoblins, which his creative fancy had drawn. The weather proved extremely unfavourable for this promenade, indeed it rained almost in torrents, the whole time. One of these severe mornings, an intimate friend of Foote's, the author, said to him, "Well, Sam, what d'ye think of this weather?" "Think," says he, "why, I think its God's revenge against vanity." The inhabitants of Stratford made what may be called "a good thing" of this; a bed and sitting-room in any genteel house, fifty pounds or more for the time; a bed for the night, three guineas, two, or perhaps down so low as one; half a guinea for the liberty of sleeping in a coach or chaise, and five shillings at least, to be in a waggon, or sitting by a fire-side. A gentleman at an inn, coming down into the yard, having left his watch up stairs, asked the ostler what o'clock it was? for which piece of information the fellow modestly asked half a crown! It was said that Garrick intended to renew this business at Stratford every seventh year, but whether himself or the nobility were not perfectly satisfied with it, or from whatever other cause I know not, he never adopted it.

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In the winter after, however, he brought out his much-admired Ode, and soon after the Jubilee, upon a much larger scale than that given before at Stratford; in particular, his Inn scene, supposed to be *there*, was wonderfully conducted;—it was indeed a "regular confusion." Gentlemen calling, bells ringing, waiters running, ostlers bawling, cooks, show-men, ballad-singers, &c. introduced, yet so regularly managed, that every tinkle of a bell was with the rest distinctly heard to the back seat of the one-shilling gallery. Before its appearance, 'twas rehearsed above a hundred times, and played the first season ninety-one nights, and but for the intervention of benefits, would have been performed oftener to overflowing houses, as there was not a single place to let in the boxes for it till the 128th night!—Garrick wrote an admirable prologue to this, which was admirably delivered by Mr King, in the character of a waiter, who, in the first scene played the part of *Ralph*, a countryman; the prologue he had great reason to be heartily tired of; for, contrary to the rules of the theatre, he was obliged to repeat it the whole ninety-one nights, the gallery-gods not suffering the piece to begin without it: Mr King, however, spoke it as well the last night as he did the first. He was not in the predicament of the original *Lockit* in the "Beggar's Opera," during the amazing run of that piece at Covent-Garden. After playing it a number of nights, the managers found fault with him for being imperfect in it. "Why, zounds," says he, "what would you have?—I've play'd *Lockit* now above sixty nights, do you think a man can remember a part for ever?"—After a few more nights, they were reluctantly obliged to give the character to another performer, for he had to-

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tally forgot every word of it! In this prologue, he says, very characteristically,

"'Twixt Hounslow and Colnbrook are two houses of fame,
Well known on that road, the Two Magpies, by name;
The one of long-standing, the other a new one,
That boasts it's the 'old one,' and this, it's the 'true one;'
A race we have had for your pastime and laughter,
Young Mag started first, with old Mag's hopping after."

The houses called the Old and New Magpies, betwixt Hounslow and Colnbrook, alluded to the old and new theatres of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden;—the last line broadly hints at Mr Colman the elder, then part-proprietor and acting-manager of Covent-Garden, having written a play, in which, with wondrous expedition, he introduced the pageant, or procession of Shakespeare's principal characters in all his plays, in imitation of that given at Stratford-upon-Avon. It was said that Mr Garrick, hearing of Mr Colman's intention, wrote to him in a most candid manner, and declared that he would give up all thoughts of performing the "Jubilee" at his theatre, if he would drop the same, Mr Colman as candidly told him he should not, and accordingly they both fell to work. As I mentioned, Colman's first appeared, and, I suppose, answered what he proposed to himself by it; that is, to "skim the cream," which he did for many successive and successful nights; but when Garrick's "Jubilee" came out, it was soon laid aside. His comedy, however, called "Man and Wife," written, as I said, hastily, and on purpose to introduce this Jubilee pageant, is, though perhaps not equal to his other productions on the forementioned account, reckoned to possess considerable merit, and still continues among the list of "*acting plays.*"

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Garrick and Colman were for many years on the most intimate and friendly terms. Colman's most excellent plays of the "English Merchant," the "Jealous Wife," with his "Philaster" (altered,) his "Polly Honeycomb," and "Deuce is in Him," were all brought out under Garrick, in Drury-Lane theatre; add to which, their jointly writing that elegant and justly admired comedy of the "Clandestine Marriage," is a fully sufficient proof,—they were both wonderfully Great Little Men!—'Tis an old saying, that "Two of a trade can never agree;" so when Mr Colman became acting-manager of Covent-Garden, they might not, indeed hardly could possibly be on the same terms, yet I believe, always entertained the same friendship for each other. Of the two great little men, Colman was the shorter, being, I think, about five inches below Garrick; in contempt of which, one morning at a rehearsal, a comedian in high estimation as an actor, who was more thought of by the public than by the literati, having some very high words with Mr Colman, passionately exclaimed, (and by the bye, he was a very tall man), "You little insignificant being, if you utter another word, I'll put you in my pocket!" A performer standing by, remarked, that if he did, "He would have more wit in his pocket than ever he had in his head!"

Soon after the "Jubilee," a farce came out at Drury, called "A Trip to Scotland," said to be written by Paul Whitehead, Esq. then Poet Laureat. I cannot believe, however, the farce to be his; for, without offence to any other, I think it was below his pen. The part in it of *Cupid*, disguised as a postillion, was certainly his; he wrote it as a kind of "chorus" to the piece, according to the cus-

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tom of old times, and having, therefore, no support from others, but long emphatical speeches by himself, it became a very arduous task for a child, as the success of the farce very much indeed depended upon him. The character was first given to Miss Rogers, who was in the Theatre two years before I was, therefore claimed at least seniority: After rehearsing it, Mr Whitehead said, "It would not do;" then Miss Ford had it, then another, and another. "Oh," says the author, "worse and worse! Mr Garrick, if you cannot find some fit child more qualified, I will not risk the farce being played this season!" At length, poor *I* was thought of, sent for in a most violent hurry, and immediately after ushered into the Great Green Room, before managers, author, and many of the first performers. Garrick, having the part of *Cupid* in his hand, without further preface or ceremony, addressed me hastily with "Now, sir, say *this* after me," (being the prologue:)

> "Ye belles—ye beaux—of whatsoe'er degree,
> Above, below, around—behold in me
> A modern Cupid!"

I accordingly repeated it, catching the emphasis, his tone and manner, as nearly as possible. Mr Whitehead immediately exclaimed, "Oh, that's enough, that's the boy!—bless me, Garrick, what a deal of trouble you'd have saved yourself and me if you had introduced him before!"—"Hey! what!" says Garrick, "'faith, I did not think of him."—The part was immediately given me, and the piece, which had long been in preparation, and nearly abandoned, brought out in a fortnight. Towards the close of it, however, the first night, it met with great opposition,



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insomuch, that, to use the expressions in the papers of the next day, and the play-house term, they said, "The farce would certainly have been *damn'd* but for the abilities and exertions of Miss Pope and Master *Cape!*"

Permit me here to observe, that having been brought up, and looked upon from infancy as the son of Mr Cape, who was but my godfather, I considered him, as others did, my real father; partly from selfish motives, and partly from a little pride, (if I *may* say so), he taught the theatric world to believe it, and until I was eighteen years of age, I was known in Drury Theatre only as his son, and by his name, and most commonly called the "Cape of Good Hope." To say another word upon this trifling subject, I beg leave to add, that I have read, and I think in Peter Pindar's works, that the original *Cupid* in the "Trip to Scotland," was a Master Thomas Blanchard, but this is a mistake; he was a boy with me at that time in old Drury, but did not perform the part till long after me. He was afterwards in great estimation in Covent-Garden theatre, and his *Rundy*, *William* in "Rosina," and his country boys in general, will never be surpassed.

In the year 1769 and 70, the managers of Drury-Lane Theatre, and all lovers of the drama, felt a severe loss in the deaths of two eminent performers, Mr Palmer and Mr Holland. As there were no less than four comedians in the house at that time of the first name, this Mr Palmer was, by way of distinction, called "Gentleman Palmer." He for some years before had long paid his addresses to the beautiful and amiable Miss Pritchard, daughter of the very worthy woman and excellent actress of that name. Many of the characters which Mrs Prit-

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chard played in her younger days with great success, such as *Jane Shore, Juliet*, and *Monimia*, some of the very nice critics at that time objected to; the only fault they could find with her, was respecting figure, which they said wanted more of beauty and delicacy. Garrick, too, when he played the tragedy heroes, such as *Hamlet, Romeo*, and *Macbeth*, they constantly exclaimed against, on account of his low stature. Churchill, in his inimitable "Rosciad," vindicates their fame, by saying,

> "Before such merit, all objections fly;
> Pritchard's genteel, and Garrick six feet high!"

Mr Palmer, though wonderfully engaging in his person and manners, and deservedly esteemed by all who knew him, yet he was thought by these ladies to have been a little wild, as they call it; this idea occasioned for some time a demur as to the union. At length, Colman's scarcely-to-be-equalled comedy of the "Jealous Wife" made its appearance, in which he played the part of *Charles Oakly*, and Miss Pritchard that of *Harriet*, in which she was everything the author and audience could desire, and he was the best *Charles* I ever saw; perhaps (unlike Garrick,) he could make love to a beautiful woman, the object of his affections, and whom he was courting off the stage as well as on, better than to a "cold marble slab!" These characters, too, were so congenial to their own feelings and sentiments, that it would seem almost as if the author had written them purposely for them; particularly in the scene of the fourth act, where, in a delicate and tender manner, *Harriet* reproaches *Charles* with his indiscretions, and he replies, "You have reclaimed me, Harriet; on my soul, you have; were all wo-



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men as attentive as yourself to the morals of their lovers, a libertine would be an uncommon character!"—It may well be supposed, all the circumstances considered, that he delivered this with such feeling that it was always noticed and applauded by the audience. Whether this play contributed to hasten their union, I cannot take upon me to affirm, but I may be allowed to think so; yet, be it as it may, they were, however, happily married during the successful run of the piece,—I may well say happily married, for no two ever, perhaps, enjoyed the state in a higher degree, until the day of his sudden, accidental, final exit! He was seized with what was thought but a slight indisposition, yet Mrs Palmer's anxiety and tenderness caused her, unknown to him, to send for the physician. His prescription was sent to their apothecaries, and she administered the draught to him, and left him seemingly composed. Mrs Palmer was then obliged to go to the theatre, and the play that night was commanded by their Majesties; towards the end of which, a maid-servant of hers came to the house in a great hurry and flurry, and suddenly informed her that Mr Palmer was dead. Her distress at the shocking surprise may easily be imagined! Mr Garrick, reluctantly, prevailed on her with difficulty, as their Majesties were there, to go on in the last scene, in order to finish the play, to prevent the confusion that might arise; she did so, but without knowing what she said. His Majesty, perceiving her distress—('twas impossible for her to conceal it)—when the curtain dropt, immediately enquired into the cause, and on being informed, he was displeased at her being desired to come on the stage that night; and, with his usual humanity, said, "If he had known it, the play should have gone unfinished." He would willingly

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have quitted the house directly, but his generous respect for the numerous and elegant audience restrained him. Great as Mrs Palmer's distresses were at the theatre, they were consideraby heightened on her return to her house, when she was informed that the draught she had given him, by a fatal mistake of the apothecary's man or 'prentice, was nothing else than strong, rank poison, and that in two hours after he had taken it, in spite of all assistance, he died in the greatest agonies!

I have said that in this season, Drury-Lane Theatre experienced another serious loss by the sudden death of Mr Holland; his abilities were entirely devoted to Melpomene; he was in those days a wonderful favourite, especially with the galleries, in such characters as *Richard*, *Bajazet*, *Pierre*, *Chamont*, *Pyrrhus*, &c. nay, eve nin *Hamlet*, which was very bad, *Romeo* much worse, and his *Barnwell*, contemptible. I cannot imagine what could possibly induce the great Churchill to think Holland a copyer of Garrick, when he says of him, in his "Rosciad,"

"I hate e'en Garrick thus at second hand."

If Holland himself really intended to be an imitator of him, he was the worst I ever saw in my life. In *Romeo* and *Barnwell*, he never caused a tear to start; his love scenes were bad in the extreme, and his soliloquies and side-speeches, if possible, still worse! these last mentioned species of the drama, were reckoned two of Garrick's many very great excellencies, and in which, perhaps, few have ever equalled him, and none excelled him. On the contrary, when Holland, in *Iago*, speaking as it were to himself in a side-speech, said,

"Oh, you are well-tuned now; but I'll let down the pegs
That make this music, as honest as I am."

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*Othello* and *Desdemona* are standing near him, and from his manner of delivering this, any person would have supposed they could not but overhear him, in which case, *Othello* would have been alarmed, as he is in the third act, only on *Iago's* saying, in a kind of half-aside speech,

"Ha! I like not that!"

And, after that, in the same scene, on his saying "Indeed!" These expressions, only half-hints, and intended by the designing *Iago*, as a "Prologue to a most fatal tragedy to come;"—these might pass without censure, but a very indifferent critic could not excuse him from the tone in which he uttered the first two lines, only by supposing that in *Othello's* finishing his rapturous speech of love and ecstacy to *Desdemona*, where, repeatedly saluting her, he says,

"And *this*, and *this*, the greatest discord be,
That e'er our hearts shall know."

In these embraces, and in this situation, a spectator must imagine that *Othello* could not have heard a drum beat at his ears, or he must certainly have heard *Iago*. Was this like Garrick? Standing by the side of him one night, when Holland was in the same character, and addressing himself to his wife, before *Desdemona*, says,

"Come on, come on, you're pictures out of doors!"

"Hey! how! what, hey!" says Garrick—"Come on, come on! What's that?—Oh, it's Holland! —I forgot what play 'twas;—I thought he'd been calling for his horse and going to battle."—His soliloquy in the second act of "Macbeth," where he sees the air-drawn dagger and is about to murder

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*Duncan*, and supposed to be near his chamber-door, where he says,

> " Thou sound and firm-set earth, hear not my steps
> Which way they tread, for fear the very stones
> Prate of my whereabout!"

In this he was still worse, and more opposite to nature, for he spoke it loud enough to make the earth and stones hear and feel him, and awaken *Duncan* himself, his groom and all the castle! With all these imperfections, or " studied improprieties of speech," he was yet, as I observed, a favourite with the public; he was possessed from nature of what, upon the whole, might be called a good figure, and a thundering voice, which he was so conscious of, that he too often made an improper use of it; I have heard him rehearse *Zanga* in the " Revenge," in the morning, almost in the same loud tones as he would play it at night, and perform *Bajazet* in the evening: Shakespeare very judiciously and kindly for the actor says, " Richard is hoarse with daring thee to arms!" but Holland scorned the indulgence of the author; he, like Mossop, was never hoarse;

> " Nor was he known a king from guards behind."

This high compliment was no doubt deservedly paid to the celebrated Booth, in *Pyrrhus*, and similar characters, on account of his wonderful grace and easy dignity,—it did not apply to Holland; however,

> He " assumed a virtue though he had it not."

He was uncommonly stiff in his deportment, which the vulgar mistook for dignity, he was almost as full of buckram off the stage, and was as ignorant and unskilled in those polite and necessary qualifications

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for an actor, (more especially a tragedian), fencing and dancing, as he was in French and Italian.

This last year of his life, 1769, a serious comic accident happened in the theatre; Holland was in the last scene of a new tragedy called "Zingis," lying on the stage supposed to be dead; by the carelessness of a carpenter above, the top of the side wing caught fire, it immediately attracted the attention of the audience, and in the alarm suddenly called out "Fire!" this alarmed Holland, who, opening his eyes, and opposite to him seeing the top scene in a blaze, like a stout hero, and the son of Zingis, bravely got up and ran away. On a less serious occasion, a circumstance like this would have set the whole house in laughter, but their eyes and attention being fixed on the scene and their own preservation, he was not observed or thought of; in a short time, however, it was happily extinguished, and Garrick being behind the scenes, as customary on the first night of a new play, and well aware that in another minute the whole house might rise, and in the confusion and struggle to get out, many accidents happen and even many lives lost in this flight and hurry, he desired Holland to go on, and acquaint the audience that all was safe: "Sir," says he, "I can't tell 'em so—you know I'm dead!" "Poh, poh, never mind that; so much the better," says Garrick, and fairly push'd him on. When he appeared, the whole house was awfully silent and attentive; he began with, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am desired by the Managers to acquaint you, that it was only the top side scene that by accident caught fire, and it was immediately extinguished, and all is perfectly safe." A general applause ensued, as proof of their being satisfied; but this was more than Holland himself was, for knowing the cri-

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ical situation he was in, he knew not what to do; it struck him, however, that as going off would be bad, and knowing that the play could not finish without the panegyrick passed on him, &c. he thought he would endeavour to sneak or steal down into his former situation, without raising their risibility; in order to which, he kept repeating, "You need not be alarmed, all is perfectly safe; don't be under the least apprehension, you may depend on it that every thing is safe." He then crept down quietly, and lay in the same spot and manner as before the accident. The audience then immediately recollected his former situation, and that he must certainly have got up and ran off! upon which they all at once burst into a most immoderate fit of laughter; nay, even Holland himself, though lying on the ground supposed to be dead, and "Albeit unused to the melting mood," or, the laughing mood, could not possibly restrain himself, and his sides involuntarily shook. The audience could not but perceive it, and the roar, which before was thought to be at the highest, was now raised an octave above. No word of the remaining part of the tragedy was heard that night, for simple as this circumstance may appear in the narration, yet when seen, it deprived the actors, as well as audience, of proceeding to the conclusion of the tragedy, with any due propriety. A few nights after, he played *Prospero* in the "Tempest," and while speaking the celebrated lines of

"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,"

to the suprise of the house, a large noxious animal called a rat, ran across the stage just before him! Whether this was ominous, or whether a performer on that evening having in Holland's hearing inad-



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vertently said that he had just come from visiting a friend who was ill in the small-pox, had any bad effect on him, I can't pretend to say; however, that was the last part he performed, for he sickened and died of that disorder in a fortnight after; yet he lived in my godfather's house, very near to my room, when I had the same, but his time was then not come! A strange circumstance happened in his last moments; the physicians treated that fatal malady in those days very differently to what they have done of late years. His room was kept extremely close and warm, a great fire and not a breath of air admitted; soon after the doctor had taken his last leave, saying there was "no hopes," the nurse who attended and attentively watched him, imagined him quite gone; she accordingly threw open the windows, and went down to acquaint the family, and make the necessary preparations, but when she returned shortly after, how great was her surprise, when she saw him sitting up in the bed! The windows were immediately shut, the doctor sent for, but before his arrival, he was finally gone.

The late Mr Foote, of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, was an intimate of Holland's, and went with many others to attend his funeral at Chiswick, a few miles from London, the place, I believe, of his nativity, at least where he was brought up with his father and brother, who were bakers. The facetious Foote, though with tears in his eyes, and on this solemn occasion, could not refrain his joke; when the body was about to be deposited, said to his friend, "What little place do you call this?" "What place!" exclaimed the other; "why, the family vault." "Ay, the family vault!" said Foote; "faith I thought they had made a mistake, I took it for the family oven!"

The loss of these two excellent performers was soon felt and lamented by Melpomene and Thalia,

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and most sensibly by Garrick and the town, but how to supply their places was a difficult matter: it was the height of the season, and provincial actors of any eminence were all comfortably fixed and settled in their winter quarters; Garrick, however, soon cast his eyes upon the late Mr John Palmer, who was then a very young rising actor; he performed several of Holland's parts that season, at a short notice, and under many disadvantages, with great credit to himself and Garrick's judgment; and in Palmer's line of smart valets and all the sprightly comedy, he was perfectly easy and "at home." Mr John Palmer, till after the loss of this "Gentleman Palmer," was always announced in the play-bills as Mr J. Palmer. Just after that event, Mr Bannister, sen. (father of the present Mr John Bannister, and lately retired; an ornament to the stage, and for many years, it is hoped, will still continue such in private life); this Mr Charles Bannister, who said, perhaps, almost as many "good things," as they are called, as even the wonderfully-witty Foote himself, and certainly many more harmless and good-natured, he came one morning into the green-room, and looking uncommonly dull, was asked the reason, "Why," says he, "I've just had a very great shock; I was but now over the way with Mr Hopkins the prompter, and Jack Palmer. (for so they good-naturedly then styled him,) he was standing by him, leaning over the back of his chair, when Hopkins ran the pen into his eye, and there's no doubt but he will totally lose it." This intelligence was received with a shock also by the other performers, but it was soon turned into an "agreeable surprise," by the sudden appearance of Palmer, sound and well. He was thenceforth in the bills styled *Mr Palmer*, and Mr Bannister's report



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was strictly just for in making out the next bill, the prompter had erased, or literally struck out his "*I!*"

This year, too, (1770,) will likewise be ever remembered in the annals of "poor old Drury," by Mrs Clive, that wonderful actress, retiring from the stage, after speaking an occasional farewell address, written by her friend Mr Walpole; after which, she resided at her seat near Twickenham, enjoying ease and independence, for 16 years. Her *Nell* in the "Devil to pay," by Coffey, was her first rise in the theatre, but her *Lady Freelove*, and *Mrs Heidleberg*, in Colman's esteemed plays of the "Jealous Wife," and the "Clandestine Marriage," her *Fine Lady*, and *Kitty Pry*, in Garrick's farces of "Lethe," and the "Lying Valet," her part in his "Guardian," with many others, will never be equalled. When Garrick read his "Lying Valet" to his partner, James Lacy, Esq. and told him he intended the part of *Kitty Pry* for Mrs Clive, he said, "I'll tell you what, David, with all your great judgment, you don't know this woman (Mrs Clive,) so well as I do; you don't see how much she will make of this part you call *Kitty Pry*; if you don't curtail it, depend upon it, she will snatch the title from you, and instead of the farce being called the "Lying Valet," they will term it, the "Lying Chambermaid." I believe Garrick accordingly profited by the hint. Her humour was broad and extravagant, but in her it was natural, inimitable, and irresistible. So inimitable, that the great actress, Miss Pope, the delight of the public, and so esteemed in private life, the oldest actress now living of Garrick's school, when she succeeded Mrs Clive in many of her characters, had still too much good sense to attempt to imitate, and justly depended on her own native sterling merit.

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Mrs Clive, like Foote, was of a very satirical turn, and like him said, perhaps, a hundred severe cutting things, to one good-natured. When (before my time) Mrs Woffington, a celebrated actress in those days, came off the stage one evening in her favourite character of *Sir Harry Wildair* in the "Constant Couple," not having met with her usual applause, exclaimed, "I can't guess what's the matter with the audience to night! 'faith, I believe half the gentlemen take me to be a man." "Very likely," says Mrs Clive, "but 'faith, the other half know to the contrary." Holland too, before mentioned, in a similar pet, came into the green-room, and standing before the glass, when playing *Richard*, vociferated, "I wonder what the devil's come to the people to-night; where the deuce have they all got; there s a plaguy thin house." "La!" says she, "how can you make any wonder about it, when the people can hear every word you say out of the house as well as in?" Notwithstanding this turn, she was greatly esteemed in private life, was reckoned very humane and charitable, a fast friend, an excellent mistress, and good neighbour. Towards the conclusion of this season, I most earnestly renewed my request to my godfather, that I might be bound to some trade; I wished to be a compositor, or bookseller, or somewhat in that line, but this he constantly denied me, saying that Mr Garrick objected to it, but I rather apprehend that the objection proceeded from his own private views. I was getting money for him.

In the summer seasons of 1771, 2, and 3, I went down to the Plymouth Theatre, under the management of the late Mr Jefferson of Drury-Lane, a man very much beloved, and an excellent actor; he took with him from London Mr Reddish, Mr F. Aickin, Mr Baddeley, Mrs Bradshaw, Miss Burton, Mr



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Slingsby a most capital dancer, and others of repute; and being commonly reinforced by performers from the Bath Theatre, and always the flower of the Exeter corps, he might justly boast of having, perhaps, the best company out of London. In one of these summers, Mr Garrick came down to pay his long promised visit to the Earl of Mount Edgecumbe, at his delightful seat; his lordship patronized a play, which Garrick promoted to serve his friend Jefferson, for whom he had a great regard; the theatre was soon full, more out of curiosity to see Garrick than the play. When he entered with his lordship the whole house saluted him in the loudest and warmest manner, at which, however, Garrick appeared no way concerned; at length his lordship in a whisper said, "Garrick, they are proud and happy to see you, won't you take a little notice of it?" "Oh, pardon me," says Garrick, "the compliment is meant to your lordship, not me." There was great modesty and politeness in this reply, with, perhaps, a little policy.

I returned to my duty at Drury for the winter, having predetermined to get rid of my godfather's shackles; but on the first night of opening, on his coming up to me behind the scenes, taking me by the hand, and with almost a tear in his eye, saying, "What, will you leave me, Ned?" I could not stand it. I went home with him again, and lost another winter, at the end of which, having found him (poor man,) grow more indolent, more extravagant, and of course more necessitous, I was fully resolved to take my last leave of him, and for the third time, went down to Plymouth.

As I had fully quitted my godfather, so I determined to quit his name of Cape, to which I had no legal right, and take my own; I mentioned this to

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Mr Jefferson, when we were going to the printers with the copy of the bill, at which he was surprised, and I could not but explain myself to him, with my resolution of taking my own name; he readily complied, but kindly observed, that as I had been there two summers before as Cape, and had acquired some reputation in the town, he feared I should not add to my credit by the change. I had, a few months before, lost my dear godmother, and by my too close attendance on her caught a violent fever; after which, having shot up a little taller, and my voice being somewhat altered, it helped to confirm Mr Jefferson's judgment; he wished me to dance the first night, as it happened I was not in play or farce. I never danced *there* so well in all my life; but yet, I rather lost than gained ground. Cape had forestalled Everard. Shakespeare makes *Juliet* say,

> "What's in a name? *that* which we call a rose,
> By any other name would smell as sweet."

Most justly observed;—but yet the change of name was ominous to me.—I remember that it gave rise in the Plymouth newspaper, on this simple subject, to these simple lines:—

> Though Everard's feet
> So true did beat
> To music sweet,
> And dress'd so neat,
> Was thought a cheat
> I'th' dancing feat,
> Compared to Cape's, so trim, so fleet;
> To th' Galleries it was grog—fresh meat;
> To Pit and Boxes, quite a treat.

This compliment paid to Cape at poor Everard's expence, I was not exactly pleased with; I was jealous of myself. I thought that although Cape had danced before three kings, and I before his

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present Majesty only; yet, as I was brought up under the same dancing-masters as himself, viz. Mr Walker, Signior Noverre, Signior Grimaldi, Signior Daugville, Mr Aldridge, and Mr Slingsby, and being a year older, something stronger, and more improved, I was hurt to think that I was not allowed, by many, to be as good a dancer as Cape: numbers of the town would by no means give credit that he and Everard was one and the same person, and the few who did seem to believe it, were only half persuaded;—

> "They were convinced against their will,
> And of the same opinion still."

Once more I returned to London. About this time, Mr Garrick confirmed, what he had long in contemplation, that humane and necessary institution, "The Theatrical Fund, for the benefit of decayed actors, who from age and infirmities were obliged to retire from the stage." Thirteen performers were to be ballotted for and chosen by the rest, in order to form a Committee. In this business there was no respect paid to persons, or the situation they held in the theatre, for he who had but two pounds a-week, stood as fair a chance of being elected a Committee-man as the first actor in the house, though it must be owned, it was a very troublesome office and attended with much inconvenience, as they had to meet once a-week upon the business, and to pay, I believe, their own expences. Their printed book of articles, given to each performer, among others, specified, that no one could have any claim on, or benefit arising from the said fund, unless he or she had belonged to that theatre five successive seasons, and made their regular payments. I had been in it twenty years, and one

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after Mr Garrick had retired. I then took my chance in country theatres; and, coming from Glo'ster, thinking to be in London on the first of May, the day appointed on which I was to make my yearly payment, which I had regularly done for years from the first institution of the fund, I unfortunately happened to be one day too late. Mr Robert Baddeley, one of the Committee, unluckily for me, was the person that year appointed to receive the payments. When I tendered him mine, he coolly replied, that "I was a day too late, he shoud'nt receive it." and I was struck off the fund: This was a great blow to me, but I was young then, and only saying, that "I hoped I should never live to want it," gave it up. He is gone, and it behoves me to tread lightly; yet I will say, that had Mr King, Mr Palmer, Mr Moody, Mr Parsons, Mr Packer, or indeed any other gentleman of the then committee been in his office, their humanity would have granted me indulgence; and had Mr Garrick been living, he would not have suffered it. Permit me here to transcribe a few lines from the excellent and humane speech given by that highly esteemed comedian, Mr Fawcett, last February, at the anniversary meeting of the noblemen and gentlemen of the Theatrical Fund, patronized by his Royal Highness the Duke of York:—He observes, "It is an institution, formed for the purpose of sheltering the aged and infirm performer from the last abyss of human misery! formed, with the intention also of rescuing him from the painful task of intruding himself before that public he once may have delighted, when infirmity presses heavy upon him, when his mind and body are bending under a load of natural decay, and, perhaps, before he is '*sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything*,' afford him a little leisure to

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collect his scattered thoughts, and breathe in quiet a short prayer, before the curtain falls upon him for ever! Age and infirmity, when pourtrayed with talent on the stage, create sympathy or derision, in proportion as the character represented is virtuous or flagitious; but they would cease to give the least gratification, indeed would be no longer tolerated or endured by a British audience, if they suspected the afflicted actor before them was really suffering under the pressure of either. It naturally follows then, that young men, or at least men in the vigour of life, must perform the aged characters, and it as naturally follows, that the aged actor must retire. Retire!—retire is easily said, and, if any gentleman can give to the veteran who has never had it in his power to hoard a shilling, a satisfactory explanation of that word 'Retire!' he will be under a lasting obligation to him. What must this man's situation be, who, having passed the greater part of his life on the stage, unused to business or employment of any other kind, when he finds himself suddenly, with no other warning than his infirmities, cast upon the world, to groan out a miserable existence, without hope or shelter but in the grave?"

This is a just and feeling picture of the decayed actor, and in many points a striking likeness of myself and my own situation. I have from infancy employed my health, strength, and abilities, for the amusement of the public, and I may say to them as *Old Adam* says to *Oliver* in "As You Like It," (literally), "I have lost my teeth in your service;" for, some years ago, I had a terrible fall from a horse at Portsmouth—I mean a wooden horse upon a pedestal, when I was representing the *Commandant*, or *Ghost*, in "Don Juan." By this accident, the

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truncheon in my hand came in contact with my teeth, and instantly deprived me of five and violently shook the rest. At the same place, having performed in the winter season every night in the week, and in particular, Harlequin and Friday, in the pantomime of "Robinson Crusoe," with the Savage Dance, at length, in the month of June, brought on a most violent fever, which confined me, deprived of the use of my limbs, for more than four months. Mr Griffin, of the Bath theatre, only 33 years of age, a good singer, in his prime, performed *Robinson Crusoe*, caught the same cold on the same night, languished in the same disorder, and died there.—I was at Portsmouth when the dreadful catastrophe happened, that the glorious vessel, called the Royal George, was sunk. Admiral Kempenfelt and his lady were at breakfast, and, no doubt, thought themselves more secure and safe from earthquakes and fire, than we thought ourselves on Terra Firma. But by the obstinacy and pride of an ignorant lieutenant, who, for the morning, had the command; and, though advised, by boats passing by, (for none on board durst say any thing to him,) he left the lower port-holes open, the sea being then calm; at nine o'clock, a little swelm came, and down she sunk! By this dreadful misfortune, the Admiral and lady, and above five hundred more were devoured in the watery element, exclusive of nearly four hundred women and children! Our theatre, of course, was shut up for some time, and the first night we opened, was for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the Royal George; the amount of which, as being given by the managers and performers, without the least deduction or charge of any kind, amounted, I should suppose, to nearly two hundred pounds.—Some time after, when I was

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again at Portsmouth, a midshipman, without any provocation, suddenly killed our carpenter. He was tried at Winchester, but having powerful friends, he got acquitted, by paying only one shilling fine! The Judge was applauded for his opinion, but shame on the Jury. In consequence of this calamity, the Old Theatre, as then called, in Portsmouth, was shut up, and as a theatre, I believe, has never been allowed to be opened since, only as a warehouse. In consequence of this poor man being quite killed, I was half-murdered. We lay idle for three months or more, till we were allowed to open the New Theatre, and then, when our benefits came on, there was no fleet, or scarcely a theatrical person in town. I may, perhaps, beg leave to mention this place, and many similar casualties that have befell me, but allow me now, to revert to part of Mr Fawcett's address:—He says, and his remark is just, among other things, that (not now expressing his words exactly,) an *old* actor may be *too old* to play an *old character*. I have heard Garrick say, that it required a young man, or as Mr Fawcett says, "A man at least in the vigour of life," to play the old man; meaning not the comedy or decrepit. humorous old men, but characters more especially belonging to tragedy. Mr Macklin gave a sad proof of this, when his memory at last forsook him, and his unrivalled performance of his great part, *Shylock*, he could not remember, apologized to the public, and Mr Ryder finished it.

I remember the great Barry, in his decline, could scarcely walk off the stage in his unequalled *Othello*; and, after, he was too old for playing *Old King Lear*. He was, as Mr Fawcett observed, the "afflicted actor, under the real pressure of age and infirmity." And when the audience plainly saw that he could

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scarcely stand, that he could not kneel down without help, or rise again without evident pain to himself and great support, they forgot "King Lear," and remembered he was "Barry." *Romeo, Othello, Marc Anthony, Varanes*, and in all that may be called love parts, none ever equalled him, I believe; his voice was so sweet and harmonious, that he was called the silver-toned Barry, the "tuneful swan." His figure, too, was tall and even handsome, and in *Romeo* none could have stood against him but a Garrick. They played it in opposition at the different theatres twelve successive nights. In the balcony, or love-scenes, with *Juliet* in the 2d and 3d acts, the critics gave Barry the preference; the 1st act, the scene with the *Friar* in the 3d act, and the last scene, they allowed it to Garrick; but I think, they never agreed or could determine, which, upon the whole, was greatest. Garrick then attacked him in his favourite character of *Othello*, but without success; indeed it may be said, it was the only part he ever failed in; yet I have heard it said by those who were reputed good judges, that he struck out many new beauties in it, never before hit upon;—his not succeeding might, in a great measure, be attributed to his want of height, being much below Barry's;—he also dressed it in a shape, which was not then the custom. It was, too, the fashion of those days for ladies of quality to have a little black boy, in a fancy dress and turban, to wait on them with the tea-table equipage; and the celebrated actor Quin, being in one of these parties, was asked what he thought of Garrick's *Othello*?—"Why," says he, "the boy plays it well enough! but confound it, whenever he came on, he put me in mind of little Pompey there with the tea-kettle."



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This ludicrous remark hurt him more than his want of figure;—he immediately gave it up, and soon was universally admired in the same tragedy, by his judicious acting in *Iago*. In *King Lear*, *Jaffier*, and many other parts, they were likewise powerful rivals; their opposition in the *first* occasioned some remarks, which I remember reading in a paper with the following lines:—

> "The town has found two different ways
> To praise the different Lears;
> To Barry they give loud huzzas,
> To Garrick, only tears!"

Which had the greater compliment, I submit to the judicious reader.

Now to revert to Mr Fawcett's speech, the kind peruser may find in the conclusion of it, how deeply and singularly it affects me! I have not only passed "the greater part of my life on the stage," but I may say, (unhappily for me), my *whole life*; having now been *sixty* years on it, out of sixty-four! so that although there may be a few living comedians on the stage and off, above my age, yet, as no one has been so *many* years on it, I think, I may be called, the "*Oldest Actor*." Again, I have not only "been unused to business or employment of any other kind," but I have been absolutely hindered, prevented from embracing any other, notwithstanding my pressing and earnest solicitations for the same for full three years. This circumstance alone, duly weighed, might extort, I think, a feeling, generous pity from those who are so averse to theatrical amusements, even from Methodists and Quakers. I have here confessed that I am guilty of the sin, which "most actors live to deplore," which is visited by the heaviest penalty, in which I am now detected, feeling severe-

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ly all its ill consequences, the sin of growing old; but as charity covers a multitude of sins, as he hopes the Charitable Theatric Fund will cover theirs; so I trust that benevolence, "the first great duty of man," will cover mine. But here again, I am, alas, unfortunate! After my belonging to Drury-Lane fund from its first establishment, and regularly paying to it for some years, I have lost all claim to it by offering my allotted stipend only ten hours too late. I shall, I freely confess, continue to think this a hard case, independent of the L.32, 10s. or L.35 per year which it deprives me of, what a consoling reflection must it have been to me, on my last sick-bed, if my poor infirm wife was standing then beside me, to have been enabled to say, "Well, blessed be Garrick for that noble institution! She will have ten pounds to put me decently out of sight, and twenty pounds a-year for supporting her through life!" Instead of this consolation, after innocently beginning my days in a play-house, I am likely to end them in a work-house! I have no fund to relieve me, no theatre to receive me, for the young actors now-a-days play all the old men's parts, and the old can't play the young. I am now almost a total stranger, go where I will. Even in London, neither my wife or self have a relation living to assist us, none under Heaven to look up to with the least hope to find one, but in the considerate, humane, benevolent public. With a feeling, grateful heart, I thankfully acknowledge that I have unexpectedly and frequently received that blessing lately, and 'tis sinful to despair.

I had been again in Drury, from my summer spent in Plymouth, a very short time, when Mr George Garrick hinted to me, that as I was now much too big for boys' parts, and yet not quite competent to the men's, his brother would be glad if I would give

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my assistance in the figure dances. I readily consented, and an addition to my salary, which he also hinted at, immediately followed. If my situation there was rather painful and troublesome to me before, what was it now? The porter, or call-man, used to come to my lodgings of a morning, and, knocking at my door, this little dialogue used to pass:—"Mr Everard!"—"Well, James."—"At ten o'clock, if you please, to As You Like It."—"Very well."—"At eleven, in the Green Room, to the reading the New Play."—"Very well."—"At twelve, to Much ado about Nothing,"—Mr Garrick will be there."—"Very well!"—"At one, in the practising room below, Mr Grimaldi's dances in the Tempest."—"Very well, James!"—"At two, on the stage, Mr Slingsby's dance, the Savage Hunters;"—"Very well, that's quite enough!"—"At half-past two, Signior Dagueville's Double Festival."—"Well, well, get along!"—"At three o'clock, Mr Atkin's Sailor's Revels."—"Bless you, get along!" "At half-past three, Signior Galli's practice of"—I, out of patience, "'Sdeath, don't bother me any more; I'll be there from ten in the morning 'till twelve at night;" and this indeed was nearly truly the case, for I have been there from ten till four in the afternoon, and having perhaps to dress and begin the play, from five till nearly twelve. At rehearsals, I have been wanted on the stage above, and in the dancing room below; as we should always attend to things above, more than things below, so I was obliged to quit the dancers and go up to the stage; then the dancers, much against their will, sat still; the performers above, in the mean time, were vexed in waiting for me, so that, though I could not be blamed by either, I displeased them both, by my utility.

After a week or two, I said to the porter, "James,

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don't trouble yourself to call me any more, its of no use; I will always be at the theatre punctually at ten o'clock, and then you can inform me of—the order of the day." He had my leave to mention this to the prompter, and accordingly I got rid of his morning importunities or commands. Passing two winters in this manner, I was engaged the ensuing summer by Mr. Foote, Theatre-Royal, Haymarket, being heartily sick of the fatigue and expence of my long journies to Plymouth; in fact, my ten weeks salary there, did little more than pay my travelling charges, and little likewise could be derived from a benefit, so little that, nay sometimes a performer lost eight or ten pounds by it. During my figuring away in all the figure dances at Drury, there was a very good dancer, though only a figurante, a Signior Voscore, was engaged as principal to go down in the summer to Bristol, which city had then a company from the London theatres, not occupied as of late years by the Bath corps. This Voscore accordingly went, was much approved of in his professional capacity, "always improving," always practising in the theatre or at home; he had what was called a benefit, but it proved otherwise, he was ten pounds deficient in the charges; when he returned to London, he continued or rather redoubled his exertions; he was withal uncommonly frugal and abstemious. This rare conduct in an actor or dancer, is sometimes not founded in policy, frequently mistaken for pride or false parsimony. Had Voscore been a little fonder of society, he might not so have failed at Bristol; however, the managers there made great allowance for him, and he could not but go down there again the next summer, and of course had another benefit. On his return to "Drury meeting," after the usual salutations, the first questions to actor or



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dancer, are, " Well, how did you pass your summer? how did your benefit turn out?" These being asked him by his brothers of the " light fantastic toe," he innocently and chearfully replied, " Oh, grand!—capital benefice!—L'Eté passè, last sommere, I lose at Bristol ten pounds by my benefit, and now dis time, I only lose two pounds six!" Poor fellow, he thought he always was to lose what others hope to gain by, and is their great dependance! A similar matter happened to Signior Dagueville, the first season he came to Drury-Lane after *his* benefit: he went up to the office to settle the account of the same; at which time he could scarcely speak any English, and the treasurer did not understand a word of French; when this curious broken dialogue took place:—" Well, Mr Dagueville, I am glad to see you, but I'm sorry you had so bad a benefit."—" Me tank you, sir, mais I canno help."—"Very true, sir—well, you'll excuse me, now to business; In the first place, here are the tickets you brought in, they amount exactly to L.14; count them over at home, you'll find it right:—You may take them, if you please."—(He did so.) " Now, Sir, here is the cash that came into the house, which is just L.44." Dagueville was eagerly about to pocket this with the tickets, when the treasurer hastily clapping his hand on it, exclaimed, " No, no, sir, this is not yours, it belongs to the managers, and you are now, sir, L.22 deficient."—" Vat you call defeshunt? Je n'entend pas, I no understand dat."—" Why, sir, the charges, the expence of the house is L.80; now, sir, you have only in tickets, L.14, and in cash, L.44, making together, L.58, so that, I'm sorry to say it, you are deficient, you lose by the night L.22." " Vat is lose? I no understand!" " Bless my soul, sir, I can't explain myself to you otherwise,—You

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are L 22 minus."—" Vat is minus?" " Dear me, dear me!—I can only say, you have to account with me for your L.14 in tickets, and L.22, which together with L.44 taken here in cash, makes up exactly L.80 for the charges; you are L.22, therefore, out of pocket by the night, you lose that."—" Parbleu, dat is nonsense, dat is Irish; how can I lose by a benefice?—out of pockete!—Vere is my benefice?" —In fine, after much awkward altercation, he found himself compelled to understand it, and went away as contentedly as he could.

As Mr Foote performed only his own pieces, excepting a few farces, I had at first to study in every one; but these being often repeated, getting soon used to them, and not having the fatigue or expense of a journey, I found it soon a very pleasant engagement. Mr Foote's comedies, as the " Minor," " Devil upon two Sticks," &c. requiring but few performers of consequence, so he seldom had above four or five, such as Messrs Palmer, Bannister, Aickin, Wilson, and Weston; the last mentioned, who was the first low comedian in the world, perhaps, for dry humour, was with him constantly. Foote had studied his genius, wrote a part for him adapted to it in all his pieces, which gained him such repute that he really could not do without him; he was very poor and insipid, if the character was above four or five lengths as they are called, or what might be written on a single sheet of paper. After the first night of Foote's " Mayor of Garrat," some friends the next day were saying how great, how wonderfully happy Weston was in *Jerry Sneak!*—" Yes," says Foote, " but if I had made the part ten lines longer, he'd have damn'd himself and me too!" Garrick used to say the same of his *Scrub*, which was the longest part he played. To see Garrick in *Archer* and

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Weston in *Scrub*, what a high treat to a lover of the drama! Garrick has performed both characters with equal credit to himself, but what a laughable, contemptible figure, how like Tom Errand in Beau Clincher's clothes, would poor Weston have looked if he had attempted *Archer!* They alternately played the low-comedy part of *Abel Drugger* in the "Alchymist," and so great was Weston in it, that many impartial critics preferred him to Garrick; however, they played it in a wonderfully different manner. Garrick, however, of course, drew by far the greatest houses; when he was very free with Weston, he used to call him Brother Abel. But he and Foote found it dangerous to joke, or be too free with him, for sure as they did, so sure was he to borrow money of 'em, which indeed he was always doing, notwithstanding he had a handsome salary, and which in those days was worth double of what it would be now. Foote's valet one morning said, with a sad countenance, he had very bad news to communicate, he was afraid to tell it him, "but poor Mr Weston was dead!" "Is that all?" says Foote; "I'm very glad of it; I wish he had died ten years ago, it would have saved me a good deal of money; while he was living, the public would not be satisfied without him, and the fellow knew *that*, but now they must." Foote always opened his theatre on the very day his licence empowered him, May 15th; but the London theatres continuing open of late years much longer than at that time, many of the principal performers of both being engaged for the Hay-market, they have sometimes scarcely been able to open it for above a month after. Foote's season then, being from the above date, till September the 15th, full four calender months, was longer than most of the summer engagements, by six weeks,

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which, to London performers who had no trouble or expense of a journey, and had the privilege of a benefit, was very advantageous, and not a fatiguing situation.

I have said that on my last return from Plymouth, I took on my own name, went to lodge and board with an old friend of my godmother's, and shook off, with the name of Cape, my godfather's shackles; in less than three years after I put on chains of my own making: I married my present wife, Ann Gibson; her father, Peter Gibson, a native of Dundee; her mother, Ann Lumsden, of Dumfries, and she herself born in the High Street, Edinburgh; they held some lands and property under one of the lords concerned in the unfortunate year 1745; In consequence of which, their little estate being then forfeit to the crown, they went and settled in London: I having a friend there who was intimate in the family, was introduced and noticed by them for some years before I married their daughter. My wife's mother assuredly must have been well known and respected, as she had the honour of being on the most friendly terms and greatly caressed by the late Countess of Buchan, Lord Erskine, Lady Cromarty, Governor Bellamy, Governor Moore, Lady Charlotte Finch, and many others. Her father died there four and twenty years ago, aged 96; her mother, twelve years since, nearly the same age; they were man and wife 68 years, had twenty one children, most of whom lived to grow up to man's estate, some beyond fifty, though none arrived at her age, being now 62. It is strange to think that they were all reckoned strong and hearty, except my poor infirm wife, and yet she has survived them all! In early infancy, she had that dreadful malady the small-pox, to such a degree that she was totally

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blind for above three years; 'tis incredible that she recovered her sight, though injured much, and apparently; age can't make it better: No wonder that she is now half blind and more, and what she does is by feel and guess. After her first accouchement, a dropsical complaint attacked her; it fell principally into her legs, and forty years she never has been free from it entirely, and no wonder then that she is now half lame; indeed she has been so severely and uncommonly afflicted in various parts of England and Scotland, that if the humane gentlemen of the faculty who have in different places so gratuitously assisted her, if they were to make a proper demand, and send in their just and most moderate bills for advice, attendance, and medicines, I am certain that two hundred pounds could not pay them. Here, then, let me pay my last tribute of respect and gratitude to those who are now no more, and whose memories will be ever dear to me. To those yet upon this transitory ball, with earnest wishes I sincerely hope that they may long continue on it, enjoying health, peace, and prosperity, a contented comfort in themselves, to their families and friends, a blessing to the poor and all mankind, as they have been to us, till at length they are summoned to receive for their labours, the crown of eternal glory.

The last summer I was at the Hay-market, I did little more than my usual routine of business, excepting that Foote, being at a loss for farces, said one morning, "They have altered and cut my first piece of the "Lyar" into a farce, at Drury-lane, and play it very often, I think I may take the same liberty with my own." He did so; accordingly it was played nine nights that season, and twice commanded by their Majesties, it being the first sum-

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mer they ever honoured that theatre with their presence. I performed a capital part in it, called *Papillion*, in which I may say I gained applause and credit which brought me into rising estimation. In September, 1775, Garrick opened the theatre with a new musical prelude, written by himself, called "The Theatrical Candidates," which highly pleased. The house, during the summer, had been much enlarged, undergone many alterations, and greatly beautified—"Beautified is a vile phrase"—but no matter for that; the prelude opened with *Mercury* (Mr Vernon,) addressing the audience, as commissioned by *Apollo*, to acquaint them that a contention had arisen between *Melpomene* and *Thalia*, the tragic and comic muses, to know which of them, in future, should have the public preference. After making some observations which had taken place respecting the improvements of the theatre, and giving an appropriate song, he quitted the stage, and left the field open to the rival candidates. *Melpomene*, (Mrs Smith,) entered first, with her tragic followers, made a short appeal to the audience, and sang her song, with proper accompaniments; then the Comic Muse (Mrs Wrighten,) with her train, descended in a similar manner; a short dialogue took place between them, during which, to their surprise, *Harlequin* trips in with his motley group, and claiming an equal share of the public favour, gives his song; *Mercury* then revisits the stage with *Apollo's* decree, that Tragedy and Comedy should equally keep their respective lines, agreeably to the estimation they were then held in by the public, and were never to encroach upon each other's ground, or on any account unite themselves, unless "When Shakespeare brought them both together." After a gentle admonition to *Signior Harlequin*, he grants

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him the indulgence of occasionally "holding up their trains," and the piece concludes with a full chorus.

This was performed several nights; after the first was the comedy of the "Brothers," with the "Miller of Mansfield." Mr Palmer, since the loss of the former Palmer and Holland, who had as I have noticed before supplied their places in tragedy and comedy, and by his unrivalled excellence in the character of the *Lyar*, obtained a multiplicity of business too much for any one to support, and held the first rank in the theatre, had got permission from Mr Garrick to resign several characters, particularly in farces, which after playing such parts as *Dionysius* in the "Grecian Daughter," he found too fatiguing for him, or perhaps now beneath him; he sent in a list of these to the prompter, among which was *Richard* in the "Miller of Mansfield." The night before opening, this being mentioned to Garrick, and Jefferson happening to be by, said that I had played it with him at Plymouth. I was immediately fixed on for the part. I was more distressed than pleased at it, coming after such an actor as Palmer; my figure, my abilities so much inferior to his; nay, conscious that even my youth was against me; for *Dick* having been obliged, as he says, to "fly from his friends and country for a crime that he was innocent of," and "dangling after his lordship several years in London," in hopes of getting a place at court. these circumstances being put together, I was evidently many years too young for the part, and although it is better to be so than too old, yet, strictly speaking, there is as great an impropriety in it, as there was in Master Betty's playing *King Richard*, or as if I should now (as I have in Edinburgh and elsewhere,) attempt *Tony Lumpkin*. It



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so happened that, in the bills of the day, my name was not mentioned for the part, which damped and mortified me a little; and when I had to read a long letter in the first scene, on opening it, I found it a mere blank! Luckily for me, I had always made it a rule to study my Letters, as well as my character; it was well I did. I cannot suppose that this negligence was designed, but I'll be bold to say, that if Mr Palmer had played the part, neither of the circumstances would have happened; but, maugre all my hurts and disadvantages, I received as much applause in *Dick*, particularly in his description of the court and London, as generally falls to his share, and moreover, a warm compliment from Mr Garrick, as well as from Mr J. Aickin and Mr Moody, who played the *King* and *Miller*, which overpaid me for all my anxiety.

In the same season, Mr Garrick one night in playing *Hamlet* was terribly distressed by an awkward but laughable mistake. A public-house called the Black Lyon, then in Little Russell-street, like most in theneighbourhood, belonged to themanagers; the under performers, dancers, and others, had liberty then to send to this house for porter or what they wanted. The landlord had got a new servant-maid from the country; had taken her two or three nights into the theatre to make her known to the door-keepers, and shew her the way to the particular dressing-rooms where she was mostly wanted. On the evening alluded to above, he gave her a gallon of porter and a plate of bread and cheese, saying, "Now, you know the way; now, mind, go strait across the stage, and turn to the right." The poor girl followed her instructions; she attempted to go "strait across," but unfortunately the scene was then up, and Garrick



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speaking "To be, or not to be?" She had no idea of going round or behind the scenes, or of their being up or down, but came before 'em in the middle of the stage with her cheese and porter. Astonished at the sight of the audience, there she stuck motionless; as may be supposed, she immediately attracted their attention, and set the house in a roar of laughter. Mr George Garrick, who was constantly behind the scenes when his brother played, mad with rage, cried out, "Come off, come off!" The scene-men on the other side, the same; the poor wench was terrified; she ran first to this side, then t'other, afraid of going off at either; the porter was all spilt about, the bread and cheese scattered over the stage, till the scene-men went on, dragged her off, and bundled her out of the house. On her return to her master, who was presently told the matter, he kicked her out of his house. He lost many pounds by this affair; the custom was lost and abolished of the dressers and others being allowed their beverage; the simple rustic lost her place, and worst of all, Garrick lost himself for the remainder of the evening; yet, notwithstanding all this noise and confusion, he did not lose sight of his character, he still was *Hamlet!* He never once looked round, or altered his position. When the tumult had, after some time, subsided, the audience, especially the boxes, felt for him, and after a whisper, a general plaudit ensued. Garrick, still preserving the dignity of his character, took no notice even of this, but when the house was composed as before, resumed the part, but it was evident that he was not "himself again" for that night.

As Garrick advanced in life, and still encreasing reputation, so he still, if possible, became more and more tenacious of it, and more easily disconcerted; therefore, during the last two years of his acting, he

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requested the musicians not to leave the orchestra for the future when he played tragedy, as their going in and out, and the doors opening and shutting caught his eye and ear, and distressed him. Till this time, after playing the music between the acts, the band used to bob under the stage, and in their music-room enjoy themselves quietly at a game of whist or drafts, till the prompter's bell gave them warning that the act was just over; this in future they were obliged to forego when he performed tragedy. His first part after this order was *Macbeth*, and conformably to the same, all the musicians reluctantly kept their seats; but a Mr Cervetto, well known to the galleries by the appellation of "Nosey," who had belonged to the theatre above forty years, and repeatedly seen Garrick in all his characters, now deprived of his customary indulgence, found it difficult to keep awake during the first act; after playing the music to which, he profoundly fell asleep! The longest pause that Garrick ever made was in this part, and in the second act, previous to his saying,

"Is this a dagger that I see before me?"

At this moment, the house was all eyes and ears, all silence, all attention; I suppose no one thought they were in a theatre, the "very cunning of the scene" had obtained the deception which it aims at, and wholly engrossed all their faculties; at this critical moment, unfortunately, poor Cervetto awoke with an uncommon gape; a loud, long, uncouth, tremendous gape! such a one ne'er heard before! The howling of a dog, compared to it, was harmony! Had a loaded gun been fired among the audience, they could not have been more alarmed; they were electrified, then, in a few seconds, went into a general laugh; indeed 'twas irresistible. However, they

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restored themselves to order, and Garrick became composed as soon as possible; but when once he got into his room, after the play was over, the storm broke out. He demanded to know who it was that made that infernal noise from the orchestra? On being told, Cervetto was brought up to him, and, perhaps, no criminal ever came before a judge with more anxiety and trepidation than he did to Garrick.

On his entering, the enraged Roscius incoherently exclaimed, "What! is it possible? can it be you, sir? is it you, who have been in the house with me so many years? is it you that made that cursed outlandish noise from the orchestra, and set the whole audience in a roar of laughter?" He went on, till poor Cervetto could just get an opening to say, "Sir, I am extremely sorry." "Confound your sorrow, sir! what's your sorrow to me? You have ruined me; I could not recover myself the whole night; all the reputation I have gained in forty years, I have lost in two hours by your execrable noise! you must have been suborned; you've been hired to destroy me; you have joined with assassins, to stab me in the vulnerable part." "No, sir, I assure you I was not hired; I abhor the idea, and to-morrow you will do me the justice to believe me, but you are now in a passion." "Ay, sir, and no wonder; but how came you to fall asleep? Did my acting displease you? was it so tiresome as to make you go to sleep?" "No, sir, but the house was so attentive, so very silent, and your acting was so wonderfully great, so much beyond, I thought, what I have often seen you doin the same part, that I was overcome, quite overpowered with sensations that I cannot express, and involuntarily dropt into sleep; I know not how to account for it, but I always do so, when I am very highly pleased."

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It has been said that Garrick was very open to flattery; if so, I know that it was dangerous ground for any one to tread on, if they valued his friendship; for if he had reason to believe they meant it as such, he never forgave it; but be it as it may, Garrick having a regard for Cervetto, and giving him full credit for what he said, this strange apology satisfied him. "However," he added, "that 'twas an odd way of expressing his satisfaction, that he could not but believe him; but that, in future, whenever he played tragedy, desired he would quit the orchestra, lest he should be so 'overpowered' again, and go into the music-room as usual." This order he very chearfully complied with, no doubt, and thought himself well off; and those musicians who prized their situations, and who, an hour before, would not have stood in his shoes for thrice the value of their best instruments, now envied him the privilege they were debarred from.

Garrick was in fact so easily distressed and disconcerted from first to last, from his first entrance on the stage to his last exit, that had he been a flower "born to blush unseen," and unhappily doomed, like many, to "waste his fragrance" in a village-barn, bad actors, bad scenes, bad dresses, no one capable of delivering even a message to him, under half these disadvantages, with all his wonderful abilities, I am certain the most judicious spectator would have seen him unregarded, for he would not have been worth half-a-crown a week.

The season after, a musical farce came out, called, "The Blackamoor wash'd White," written by the Rev. Henry Dudley Bate, a gentleman in great estimation, author of the "Flitch of Bacon," the "Rival Candidates," &c. This piece was said to possess considerable merit like the forementioned,



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but met with a contrary fate. The supposed "Blackamoor" is a white lover, who, in the disguise of a black servant, gets into the family of his wished-for bride's father; having attained his object, he enters in the last scene as himself. Mr Vernon, however, had not sufficient time allowed him to "wash the Blackamoor white!" he was half and half, had seemingly a black eye, smeared cheeks, and made indeed a ludicrous appearance; the audience were (what they very seldom are) ill-natured the whole night. As the author was a political writer, and conductor of the *Morning Herald* newspaper, whether they had taken any offence relative to that, or on some other account, I can't say, but the circumstance above alluded to increased their displeasure, and the piece was damned. They attempted to perform it once or twice afterwards, but in vain; the clamour was so loud and universal on the third night, that the farce was not suffered to proceed, and a riot was apprehended;—Mr Vernon came forward to address the audience, they would not hear him;—then their great favourite Mr King advanced, but he gained no better success. Mr Garrick was obliged to come on himself, and being well known to the boxes and the major part of the house, met with a proper reception, and immediately obtained their attention. He briefly informed them, that perceiving the piece was not likely to gain their approbation, "the author had finally withdrawn the same, and they should not again attempt to perform it." This assurance satisfied the house, and they testified it by a general plaudit. Before it was well over, and Garrick could retire, a person from the pit (a stranger to him, and ignorant also of his being the manager), called out, "You won't attempt to perform it again, how are we sure of that?" This question coming from the pit so un-

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expectedly, surprised and confounded Garrick for a moment, but collecting himself, he soon replied, "How are you sure of that? Why, because I tell you so!" This caused a hearty laugh in Garrick's favour, but was so much against the pit gentleman, with some other tokens of derision, that he was glad to quit it as soon as possible.

Having been with Mr Foote now two summers, and in the same pieces repeatedly, I wished for a situation where I was likely to have more variety of business and more practice; I readily accepted therefore of an engagement with Mr Johnston, son of the box book-keeper, to go with him to Brighton; he was not calculated for a manager, especially a place so much frequented by the nobility, though to be sure Brighton was then only beginning to flourish: not a single house upon the Steine, much less beyond it; only a small place for half a dozen musicians, and a bit of a shop they called a library; how very different to what it is now! Yet even then, our manager and company were infinitely below what Brighton and the visitants so well deserved; they were kind and liberal, gave us wonderful encouragement, and when we played "Hamlet," "Romeo," "Othello," "Richard," or "Alexander the Great," they were so good-natured and so easily pleased, that they enjoyed and laughed more heartily at our tragedies than our comedies; and as I had little or no concern in the tragedies, I may say, without boasting, that they highly merited that compliment; 'tis true that I played *Polonius* and the *Gravedigger*, (the first old parts I ever performed), *Mercutio*, *Roderigo*, &c., but yet I cannot call these *tragic* characters, no more than *Osrick* or the *Gentleman Usher*, as represented by Lamash, who then belonged to Drury-Lane as well as myself, and was at this time the only actor of sterling merit in the company: "Our Hero," for instance, "was a

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youth by fate designed," not for the stage! clumsily formed, unlettered, unaccomplished, unadorned, and should have been "unhousel'd, unanneal'd and "unappointed." He "bellow'd" so as to "outherod Herod," and stamped and strutted as if he had got a pair of unwieldy jack-boots on; in fine, he was one of Shakespeare's "robust, perriwig-pated fellows," made by "one of Nature's journeymen, and not made well either." The nobility and gentry absolutely bespoke "Alexander the Great" three nights, on purpose to have a treat and laugh at him; the poor man was certainly right, when he boasted that "the play was bespoke entirely upon his account," yet he was so blinded by his vanity that he could not see to place it to the right account; in consequence of which his pride became contemptible and intolerable. The rest of the gentry were such "water-gruel without salt," that 'tis useless to notice them; only to give a further idea of the manager's judgment in bringing such a corps to Brighton, I shall with some reluctance speak of two of the ladies, fit "Rival Queens" for our "Alexander the Great." Their merits and demerits were much the same; one failing or misfortune attached to them equally; their timidity, weakness of their nerves, or delicacy of constitution was such, that they could never get over the 2d act of the play without having recourse to a cordial; as their diffidence or confidence increased, I know not which, so did their passion for the exhilarating drop; in the 3d act they became evidently more lively; in the 4th act, almost inarticulate; and in the last, "sans eyes, sans feet, sans every thing." One lady gave many proofs of this, but especially one night in the character of *Alicia*. When in her frenzy fit at going off, she exclaims, "I go, I fly, I follow thee!" the scenes not

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being "so wide as a church door," she ran against them, and with great difficulty made her exit.

The other lady gave as many proofs of this propensity, particularly one night in the *Queen* in "Hamlet," where, being seated, and having, by mistake, got the poisoned cup, she soon cries out, "'Tis the drink, the drink, Hamlet," and in spite of herself, fell off the chair. The galleries knew the real cause, and cried out, "Ay, ay, 'tis the drink; we know it, you need not tell us that." This might be very entertaining to *them*, but not so pleasing to the ladies in the boxes.

As I've noticed, I played only comic characters, and such with very great success. I had every reason to believe, that the audience always laughed *with* me, not *at* me, as at my friend Alexander. I played *Sharp*, *Jobson*, *Mock Doctor*, and *Jerry Sneak* repeatedly, with much credit to myself, and *Davy*, in "Bon Ton," fourteen nights that summer; I am not so foolish and vain, as to think that the farce was bespoke entirely upon my account. There was a Mr Usher, whom I exclude from the "water-gruel list," a respectable performer many years in all the London theatres, though *King Lear* and *Sir John Falstaff*, which he played with us, were certainly too much for him. His *Sir John Trotley* had not, 'tis true, the quaintness and humour of Mr King, the original, but he was easy, chaste, natural, and indeed, quite at home in it. Mr Lamash's *Lord Minikin* was the best I ever saw, though at first I regretted that he did not play his London part in it, *Jessamy*, in which he was so excellent; but there was a young man in the company who used to ape and copy Lamash in dress and manner, as Robin does Chapeau; he took much pains in instructing this shadow of him in the part of *Jessamy*,

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and 'twas by much the best he ever played. Colonel Tivy was a good figure, and Miss Tittup had considerable merit, and she "by far outdid her late outdoings;" so that it was not only well played, but it was *new*, having been brought out but the winter before, at Drury-Lane, which, together, caused it to be performed fourteen nights—a great many for a summer Theatre; however, I may say, that it was evident to the managers and company, if they had ears and eyes, that I greatly *contributed* to it, for they could plainly often *hear* them say in the boxes when they were about to rise, "Oh, stop a bit; let us have Everard's drunken scene," which was the first in the 2d act; after which, they would immediately *see* them thinned, and long before the farce was over, perhaps entirely empty.

The *theatrical stars* were not then so numerous, or at least so visible as of late years; however, we were most agreeably enlightened by a brilliant spark from Venus, in the beautiful form of Mrs Baddeley, who was then in her zenith; she was advised to come down for her health, and performed several nights to elegant and crowded houses. The manager, from the instructions he had received from his ingenious father, having become a tolerably good machinist, understanding something of painting, &c. had now fully made up his mind not to return to London, but carry on his plan of management. He had engaged some performers and a town, and earnestly wishing me to join him, made me a very liberal offer, which, however, I thought proper to decline. He knew I was not pleased with my situation in Drury-Lane Theatre; indeed I must say I had no right. I was, as I've said, in capacity of actor and dancer; it was unprofitable, humiliating, and fatiguing, but I would not run the risk of offend-

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ing Mr Garrick. Finding I persevered, he was determined to make me do so, and by *that*, glad perhaps to continue with him, or that I should go without my benefit; in order to which, he fixed my night on the *very Saturday* that Drury-Lane was to open, when a letter had been sent a fortnight before by the prompter, requiring me to be in London without fail the Monday previous to the opening, being wanted in a new Prelude. I told him he broke his agreement, which was that I should have a benefit before I was required in London—I expostulated with him in vain—he was obstinate as ignorant. Not liking to be thus unjustly deprived of my benefit, and which I had every reason to believe would be a great one, the only hope and reward for my summer's labour, and which, in fact, I much needed; having a wife to support unemployed, lodgings dear, what was my poor salary of twenty shillings a week? I ventured at last to wait on, and explain my case to my principal friends. They thought me hardly used, and took my cause in hand; particularly the Hon. Henry Dashwood, afterwards Lord Le-Despenser. They condescended to write, to, and then to wait on him, to no purpose; this irritating them, they became warmer in my cause than ever. The nights of playing were Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. This manager had fixed his own benefit for the *Saturday*, when he knew I was obliged to be in London on the *Monday*. On the previous Friday, when the "Maid of the Oaks" was to be performed, in which I had to play the part of *Hurry*, I was advised by these patrons and friends not to go on that night, and accordingly, the day before, sent in my refusal. By their kind advice, I was told to come on the stage, and make my cause known to the audience. I said,



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I feared that would not answer my end; for the manager was so ignorant of the respect due to the public, that he would very probably come on the stage, without any ceremony, and a scuffle might have ensued, similar to what happened betwixt him and another comedian the summer before, when they disgraced themselves and fought upon the boards, before the audience. They then advised me to make my appeal to the public in any part of the Theatre I might choose, saying at the same time, which was great encouragement to me, that if it failed, they would make up a *purse* for me, and that they would be there to support me.

This was one of the most critical moments, one of the severest and most awful trials, I had ever in my life. To appear on the stage, for the above reason, I knew was of no avail; to go into the boxes, would have been indecorous; the pit, too conspicuous; in fine, I paid my shilling, and went into the gallery. I sat till the play was over; I saw my friends and patrons in the boxes; I had not courage to rise; a song was given, the farce was nearly going then to begin; I never was so distressed. I had only the next night, Saturday for my benefit, or to have none; and, if I did not make this appeal to the house, I should have no resource, by not following the directions of my best friends. I at length heard the bell ring for the music to play, to begin the farce. No criminal on the point of execution ever heard the toll-bell with so much apprehension; his fate was certain, mine was doubtful. I had not then a moment to spare; I knew not what to say; I had nothing studied; the thought struck me, that if I once began, I must go on, and at all events the attempt would reconcile me to my patrons. With fear inexpressible, I suddenly rose, and said from the

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gallery, "Ladies and Gentlemen,"—an awful silence and attention ensued. Had I at that moment a thousand pounds in my pocket, I think I should freely have given it, if, with credit, I might have gone out of the house; but as I had begun, as I said, I was compelled to proceed. In fine, after apologizing to the house for the indelicacy and impropriety of addressing them in that manner, and from such a situation, and explaining the justice and necessity of the case, after a few seconds, a buz, a murmur, a plaudit ensued, and soon the manager was called for from the boxes. He would not appear. They attempted to begin the farce; it was not suffered. The manager, at length, was compelled to make his appearance, and a strange appearance it was. He might truly have said it was his "first appearance on any stage," and every one would have believed him, at least when he appeared solus. To add to my anxiety and embarrassment, he addressed *me* instead of the audience, with, "Mr Everard, what did you please to want?"

This occasioned a hearty laugh from every one, except myself, who was more and more confounded; I was, however, obliged to answer his strange abrupt question, and then put interrogations to him which he could not and durst not answer; he was obliged and glad to get off with laughs and hisses. As I state nothing, to my best knowledge, but real *facts*, so will I not relate any circumstance, (intentionally) to hurt (even if it lay in my poor power,) the few who are still living that I mention, or the memory of those "who are gone down to the house of mourning."

When they attempted again to commence the farce, which was "High Life Below Stairs," they would not suffer it to begin until *my benefit* was



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given out for the next evening, Saturday, which he had, (manager-like,) fixed for his own. His wife, who was to have played *Kitty*, threw herself into fits on the occasion, and an apology was made for some one else to go on for the part. The boxes broke up soon, and by appointment I went to my friends to arrange the bill of fare for the next evening. Before it could be made out suitably to their *palates*, it was three o'clock in the morning, and *then*, in spite of all my remonstrances and entreaties, I was obliged to undertake the part of *King Richard III.*; as a kind of *desert*, I had to play *Mungo* in the "Padlock," and by way of *bon bouche*, was under the necessity of giving my friends in the gallery a hornpipe after the play; though, for had I been compelled to it, after playing *Mungo*, I should have appeared like the "Blackamoor washed white!" My exhibitions on that evening reminded me of a playbill in a village, wherein I saw in large characters, "HAMLET, with a hornpipe in taste and style, by Mr Scotcher!" It brought to my mind, too, a similar matter that I heard Mr King speak of in the Green-Room of Drury-Lane Theatre, for although he was at that time at the highest round of excellence in his line, with his usual good humour, he was not ashamed to say, "I remember that when I had been but a short time on the stage, I performed one night *King Richard*, gave two comic songs, played in an interlude, danced a hornpipe, spoke a prologue, afterwards *Harlequin*, in a sharing company, and, after all this fatigue, my share came to threepence, and two pieces of candle!"

*My* humble merit, however, was much better rewarded, for when I had paid fourteen guineas to the manager for his charges, and nearly five more for additional expenses, I netted full forty pounds. As

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we had then no printer in Brighton, our bills were done by Mr Lee, at Lewis, nearly eight miles off; to send there and receive them in due time, could not be expected, so that I had only two sheets of paper written and posted up on the doors of the theatre. I had several other unforeseen impediments thrown in my way; one in particular was, that the manager's wife would not go on for the *Queen*, nor could I find a substitute in the company, till Mrs Baddeley kindly condescended to read it, and after played *Leonora* in the "Padlock." Considering the shortness of the time, what fatigue I had to go through, and the many disadvantages I laboured under, it was wonderful that I came off with so much credit to myself, and so much profit. After waiting on my best friends the next evening to return my grateful thanks, I set off on the Monday morning, being high minded, on the top of the coach, once more for London.

This was the last season that Mr Garrick performed; in the course of which he went through most of his principal characters, announcing in the bills, "being the last time of his appearance in that part," on which occasion the house was scarcely half large enough. As he began in Goodman's-Fields Theatre in *Richard the Third*, and which was the foundation of his future fame, he intended *that* to be his last part in Drury. Speaking of Goodman's-Fields, I remember four short lines in a little poem on the occasion:—

"I saw him rising in the east, (Goodman's-Fields.)
In all his energetic glows;
Now, see him sinking in the west, (Drury-Lane.)
In greater splendour than he rose."

The first tragedy their Majesties ever commanded, I believe, was to see him play *Richard*, being in-

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tended for the last night of his performing. Had the theatre then been five times larger than it is now, it would have been full; persons numberless were at the pit and gallery doors soon after ten o'clock in the morning, the places in the boxes taken, and might have been let ten times over. In the evening, after their Majesties arrival and being seated, the play, as customary, immediately began; but the noise made without doors with people pressing to get in, the confusion which prevailed among those who were in, and could not squeeze themselves into a seat, was such, that notwithstanding the presence of Majesty itself, not a single syllable was heard till the first act was nearly over, and Garrick had to make his appearance; the audience, for the most part, knowing this; the people without doors finding in vain their efforts to get in, and those who were in, having crammed themselves together as comfortably as they could, in a minute all was silence; but in the next moment, all was noise again and uproar; the galleries insisted on the play beginning again, for, as I have said, not a word had been heard; his Majesty on being asked, consented to this, and moreover, knowing Mr Garrick's disposition, sent Lord Harcourt to him, telling him to make himself perfectly easy, and by no means to hurry or distress himself, but take his time, for they would patiently stay till he was collected. After this compliment, the play, strange to say, began again! Determined as he was to finish still with *Richard*, he was prevailed on to perform it again; previous to which, by strong solicitations from many of the nobility, he consented to play one night more, assuring them positively that it should be the last, as indeed it was. He played *Don Felix* in the "Wonder;" I am not ashamed to say that on that evening I

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played the little part of *Vasquez*. He spoke the last time as *Don Felix*; I can give but a very poor description of the loud plaudits that ensued from all parts of the house, and, I believe, from every one in it, ladies as well as gentlemen. He, with the other performers, Mr Smith, Mr King, Mrs Abington, Miss Pope, &c. kept retiring to the back of the stage; Garrick then slowly advanced, leaving the rest standing in a circle behind. In an instant a different sensation ran through the house; till then it seemed as if they had quite forgot that this was positively the last night of his ever appearing. An awful profound silence ensued He addressed them in prose, seemingly without any study, saying that "The jingle of rhyme and the language of fiction would but ill suit his feelings." After expressing his most grateful acknowledgments for their kindness so many years bestowed on him, he took his final leave, and quitted the stage on the 10*th of June*, 1776. The applause he received at the conclusion of the play was very different to what was given now; it then was long, loud, unanimous, rapturous; now, it was "Not loud, but deep"—not rapturous, but like a muffled drum—not unanimous, for the hands that a minute before were together beating, in rapture, especially the ladies, were now employed in using their white handkerchiefs;—

"And tears are honest, when the hands are not."

His universality has been acknowledged by his cotemporaries; such or such an actor in their respective fortes have been allowed to play such or such a part equally well as him, but could they perform *Archer* and *Scrub* like him, and *Abel Drugger*, *Ranger* and *Lusignan*, *Bayes* and *Benedick*—speak his own prologue to "Barbarossa," in the character of



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a *Country-boy*, and in a few minutes transform himself in the same play to *Selim*? Nay, in the same night he has played *Sir John Brute* and the *Guardian*—*Romeo* and *Lord Chalkstone*—*Hamlet* and *Sharp*—*King Lear* and *Fribble*—*King Richard* and the *School-boy!* Could any one but himself attempt such a wonderful variety, such an amazing contrast of characters, and be equally great in all? No, no, no!—"Garrick, take the chair!" Or allow me to bid farewell to him in his loved author's lines:—

> "He was a man, take him for all in all,
> We ne'er shall look upon his like again."

For the second time, I now went off again to Brighton, where the preceding summer I had received such favour; we had a new manager, a Mr Fox, who had obtained upon easy terms a lease of the theatre for fifteen years, with liberty to give it up at the expiration of five or ten years, if he found it did not answer his end, and which he gladly experienced he had no occasion to do. The performers he engaged were much superior to what had been there before; Mr Ward, Mr Farren, Mr Lamash, Miss Morris, Mrs Lee, Miss Ross, Miss Kirby, Miss Satchell, (now Mrs Stephen Kemble,) Mr Sparks Powell, Mr Wordsworth, Mr Butler, and several others of great respectability; yet, notwithstanding, it was not what might be justly called, a "good company," at least not a *useful* one; "there were two many eggs in one basket;" too many in the same line. We had scarcely been a fortnight together, when we were quite at a stand, and could not, or rather would not, do a single play. To account for this, the manager, who should have known better, had given under his hand in their *cast* as it is called, the same part to half a dozen performers, and they all persevered in playing *that* or nothing. He called a meeting, and

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said he would not care what plays we fixed on for the ensuing two nights, if we would do any thing, or he must shut up the house. Nothing, however, could be settled; at last I proposed the "Stratagem." Here again, for the forementioned cause, we were at a stand; we had no less than seven *Archers*, but no *Aimwell*; at least no one that *would* play it; luckily no performer interfered with me, and my part was *Scrub*. Seeing this play nearer than any to be done, and no other impediment in the way, I said "Well, sir, the play of the 'Stratagem' was never known to stand still for want of a *Scrub*; if you can't find an *Aimwell*, I'll be bound you have half a dozen *Scrubs* in the company; I, for this time, will give it up, and play *Aimwell*," which I had never done, and quite unfit for. An old actor, with a strong impediment of speech, by far the worst of the seven, played *Archer*. Lamash went on for *Scrub*, and was as much out of his line, as I out of mine. On the night of performing, after the third act, some gentlemen came to the manager, wishing to know the reason of the play being set upon its head in that manner, which it evidently was?—He told them the cause, which satisfied them, only they added, that if they had observed the bills they should not have come, and soon after left the boxes An explanation immediately took place between the manager and company; some came in for the "Give-and-take-plate," and conformed, some refractory ones were dismissed; some made a voluntary exit; so that when we were thin'd of eight or ten, and began to "pull together," we found we could do business very smoothly and well. The public were pleased to be satisfied with us, and so was the manager, the business having turned out much better than his warmest expectations, as a proof of which, towards the end of the season he gave the company a handsome

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supper, and thanks for their assiduity and exertions; the benefits too had generally answered very well, and mine again a good one. James Lacy, Esq. Mr Garrick's late partner in Drury-Lane Theatre, a most worthy, humane gentleman, a few months before bade farewell to earthly concerns, and his son Willoughby was left a handsome fortune, and his half of the theatre; Mr Garrick had disposed of one quarter of his share to Dr Ford and the other to R. B. Sheridan, Esq., and Mr Linley his father-in-law, having married his accomplished daughter, the beautiful "maid of Bath." As gratitude had no claim on me now, respecting these new managers, and my situation there, as I have said, being very unpleasant, I had no thoughts of returning to Drury; my intention being no secret, I had received a letter from town, while at Brighton, strongly advising me "By all means not to think of leaving London; I had been spoken of there very highly—I was much noticed and rising in the public estimation—there were 'New Lords, New Laws,' and no doubt some changes would take place greatly to my advantage." This coming from a person who was under-prompter there, and, of course, pretty well acquainted with the movements and secrets of the theatre, it had the desired effect by flattering my hopes, and once more I went to my old shop. I found, however, my work and wages still the same, and soon regretted my return; we played as usual, at the beginning of the season, only three nights in the week, for perhaps six weeks; the same at Covent-Garden Theatre, when every performer has but half salary; mine, therefore, all this time was only fifteen shillings a-week, having no more than thirty when we played every night, though I'll be bold to say, according to what was then paid to



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actors and figure-dancers, I clearly deserved double. Finding presently that I had no reason to expect any alteration in my favour, I wrote to the managers, explaining my situation, the variety and multiplicity of business I was engaged in, the smallness of my income, with the hope that they would think me deserving of some addition to it. After waiting a month, I received for answer, that "My present salary was thought sufficient." I now was fully determined to quit, and Mr Wolfe, one of the Exeter managers, having with his partners long wished me to join them ever since I went to Plymouth, I gladly closed with him, accepting his offer of a guinea and a half a week the year round, and four single benefits; considering, as I have mentioned, the deductions of salary at the beginning of the winter in the London theatres; that on the eve, and on Christmas Day, and January 30th, (King Charles' Martyrdom,) that on these three days there is "No play, no pay,"—that for six weeks in Lent, they perform but four nights a-week, which again reduced my little salary of thirty shillings a-week to twenty—that after *that* came Passion-week, when they don't play a single night, which again reduced it to—nothing at all!—Allowing for this reduction, and that I had no chance of gaining any thing in London by a benefit, except, perhaps, by selling a few tickets at half-price, and then having to seek for a summer engagement—putting all these circumstances together, my offer to go to Exeter was worth six times more than my situation then in London. Mr Wolfe, however, being on the most friendly terms with Mr Willoughby Lacy, wished me to ask his permission to quit Drury-Lane, which I did the next day—obtained it, and took my formal leave of him; immediately I made the prompter ac-

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quainted with this, and gave him notice not to expect me any more there after *that* evening; in the course of which he informed me that Mr Sheridan would speak to me in the Green-Room, when all was over. I could even scarcely credit this, but to my surprise, he came!—told me, that the prompter had fully satisfied him how very useful I was; that my wish respecting an advance of salary was very just and reasonable; that he till then was unacquainted with my utility, and that my salary should be raised from that time one pound per week, and hoped I would continue with them. Seeing it would be agreeable to Mr Wolfe, it was agreed on. I went to his quarters that night, and supped with Mr Jefferson and him. He said he had been with Mr Lacy that morning, who acknowledged he had given me permission to quit, but as I had been a child of the theatre, and beloved by his worthy father, he seemed reluctantly to part from me. I then told him of Mr Sheridan's offer to me. He was sorry he said to lose me, but upon the whole, did not regret the matter, as he felt that it would have caused a breach, or at least a coolness between Mr Lacy and him, which he would not have run the risque of for any possible advantage. This irksome affair was at length settled, I thought, to my content and profit; but alas! I was sadly disappointed. After a lapse of three weeks—and no difference made to me in point of salary, I wrote the next, to the managers, and gently reminded them. The week after, they had not been altogether—the next, Mr Sheridan was there, and I was "promised again"—the week after it was forgot, but the next I was promised still, and "in sure and certain hope of a disappointment." Tired out with repeated put-offs, and the winter being then far advanced, I gave

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up my claim and expectations, and at the close of the season received, to my surprise, a notice in due form from the prompter, that "there was no further occasion for my services." I felt myself hurt at this, but did not regret it, as I had predetermined not to continue there any longer. I went, however, to the Adelphi, and acquainted Mr Garrick with the circumstance, and although, as well as himself, Dr Johnson and Dr Goldsmith knew me from infancy, and would have given my asseverations full credit, yet he was so astonished at this matter, that he could scarcely believe me, till I went home and brought him the prompter's letter. I plainly saw that he was heartily vexed at this, as if, indeed, he thought it a kind of insult to himself. Recovering from his chagrin, he asked me if I wished to return to Drury? I said, "No, indeed, sir." He did not seem displeased at my reply; enquired how or where I meant to dispose of myself for the next winter? I said, "I should like to be at Bath." "What!" said he, "had you rather be at Bath than Covent-Garden?"

Like Sir Francis Wronghead, I doubt that I said *ay*, when I should have said *no*; but indeed my reason was, that I supposed I should have more business at one than at the other, and I was young. He said he would then recommend me to the proprietors there, and I should hear from him.

The beginning of this last season Mr Garrick was desired to read a piece before their Majesties at Buckingham House. The piece, his own "Lethe," in which he introduced another "Fine Gentleman," a "Jew and an Irishman," and made the part of *Æsop* more respectable, by adding some applicable fables. He being very partial to my plain writing, and I knowing his manner, and acquainted with his hand,

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which was no easy matter to make out, he borrow'd me, as I may say, of Mr Sheridan, to go with him on the occasion, down to his seat at Hampton, as his amanuensis. I was there with him about ten days, though, if he would have let me, I could have finished very well in three; sometimes I was obliged to ask him what such or such a word was; he constantly replied, "Oh, leave a blank for it, or put in a word of your own, for if you can't make it out, I'm sure I can't." I returned to town in his coach with him, Mrs Garrick, and Mrs Col. Patten his niece. This had been a very easy, profitable, and pleasant time to me, but I found it had not been so agreeable to the prompter there, or the ballet-master, for I had innocently caused them and all the figure-dancers a deal of added trouble; indeed, without vanity, I may say of myself, as the *Prince of Wales* says of his loose companion *Falstaff*, "They might have better spared a better man." Indeed, I believe, I was more missed than an actor of ten times more merit, at ten pounds a-week.

However, at the end of the season they missed me altogether, and I went again to Brighton, under the same manager; the theatre as well as the town became more improved and more frequented. Mrs Baddeley, too, visited us again; she was to have performed *Patty* in the "Maid of the Mill," for my benefit, which I had great reason to believe would have proved superior to any I ever had there; the manager's charges were now twenty pounds. In the morning of the play-day, I had given him my note of hand for the same, as was customary with all. In the afternoon, Mrs Baddeley was suddenly taken so dangerously ill, that it was impossible for her to play. This to me was a thunder stroke! what could I do? I was in the lion's paw! The ma-

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nager told me, I must do some other play. I replied, "Let me do what I will, there won't be three pounds in the house." "I can't help that," says he, "I won't lose the night." "Well," said I, warmly, "I won't come near the theatre; you can't force me to play." "No," rejoined he, "I can't force you to play, nor you can't force me to shut up my house; I shall have the theatre lighted up as usual; the company will all be here; I shall keep the doors open from six till twelve; if you don't come, I have got your note for twenty pounds, payable on demand; I shall send my treasurer to you with it early to-morrow morning, and if you don't immediately take it up, I'll arrest you for it."—(Pleasant enough that.)—He then went on—"On the other hand, if you will settle some play, and do the best you can with the night, I'll never distress you about your note, and soon as possible you shall have another benefit." After a short consultation with a few friends, I was advised "of two evils, to take the least," and the last. I accordingly performed the "Stratagem," had about ten pounds in tickets in the house, and not two in cash; in fine, like poor Voscore, I was twelve pounds loser by the night. The manager, 'tis true, kept his word with me, by not distressing me for the balance of my note; he only stopped every shilling of my salary till it was paid, without the least allowance or abatement, and then generously, as he had promised, let me have another benefit for another twenty pounds, and by which, 'tis true, I might have cleared twenty more, but the loss of the first reduced the profits of the second to a very small remuneration.

This turned out a remarkably profitable summer, not only for the theatre, but the inhabitants in ge-



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neral, and proved, as I may say, the laying the foundation-stone for the building of Brighton, by being, for the first time, highly honoured with a visit from his Royal Highness the Prince Regent. This circumstance brought down a great increase of nobility and other visitants to the town, stamped its popularity, and protracted the summer season, to the great joy and advantage of the residents, till almost winter.

As I had lost my situation in Drury, I had not made provision, as I should indeed have done, for another, till too late. In consequence of Mr Garrick's recommendation, I might have been engaged at Bath, but as it was only at a guinea a week, and as the articles of some performers there, in what I thought my line, were not yet expired, I did not feel myself inclined to accept it. I continued at Brighton till November, having been very unwell great part of the season, humanely and constantly attended by the worthy Dr Kippin, and otherwise greatly befriended by him. The late amiable and generous Duchess of Devonshire condescended to give me her name and patronage for a concert in the elegant Assembly Rooms, Castle Inn, and behaved with her customary liberality. I then went with my wife to London, and, at her father's and mother's, lay ill the whole winter. On the approach of summer, I was so weak, and low in health and pocket, that I was averse to undertaking a long journey into the country. In a pleasant spot, about two miles from London bridge, a commodious house was just built, (not the house that Jack built, for it was erected by one Peter Paterson,) called the China-Hall Theatre, in the centre of a large garden, where vast numbers used to repair to tea. The proprietor, a dealer in china, selling wines, cyder, ales, &c. thought the in-

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stitution of a play-house there must prove of great advantage to him; so indeed it was, both to him and us, for the gardens and the theatre were full almost every night. They had some claim to the public support; the first was supplied with every article of the best quality, and the play-house could boast of as good scenery as the size would admit of, good dresses and decorations, and really a good company of comedians; so they should be, especially so near town. Mr Woodfall, an editor for many years of one of the most generally circulated newspapers in London, spoke of them in almost the highest terms of praise.

"To compare," as they say, "very small things indeed to great," as the west end of the town was deserted to go and see Garrick on his first appearing at Goodman's-fields, so, in some sort, did many persons of the first fashion, from London, condescend to visit us, till the Rotherhithe road was almost impassable for carriages. But, in a few weeks, this pleasing scene suddenly passed away, our theatre was burnt down! A day or two before it happened, papers were posted up about the neighbourhood, intimating that "the devil's house should soon be destroyed," and many such pieces of stuff that plainly pointed at us; but we took no notice of it, except to laugh at it; had we only employed a watchman nightly to attend the gardens, it might have been prevented; but we had not the precaution, nor the sagacity of King James of Scotland, to discover "a gun-powder plot," for such a one it evidently was. On the night it happened, I was by chance out of the farce, and having finished the play, finding them ready to begin, I told the musicians I would not dance, as I was then occasionally engaged to do, till after the first act of the farce; the manager under-

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standing this, desired that I would not till after the entertainment; adding, "He wished *that* to be the last thing." He did not literally wish it, but his words were prophetic, for it was *indeed the last thing!* A few acquaintances from London came to see me that evening, said they had ordered a bit of supper at the Royal Oak, close to my lodging, which was half a mile from the theatre, and desired my company. We had not long finished, when a person coming in, observed, that "he was afraid the fire which happened that morning on t'other side the water, had broke out again." Presently after, another came, and said, "he was sure it was on this side." In a few minutes we were again more alarmed—went to the door—saw the road in a blaze of light—ran up to the theatre, saw it all in flames, and in two hours from the time we finished, it was burnt down level with the ground. The play-house was built of wood, only bricks a yard high, on the outside was the pit-door, with a wooden kind of sentry-box for the money-taker, which was left open; the day before our landlord had sent him in some hampers of wine, which were lying about empty in the garden; the cash-taker's box was crammed full of these, with straw and combustible matter, for it commenced so soon after the play, that on the first alarm of fire, several who had supped and were drinking in the China-hall, came out and saw them. All that could be saved was two or three chests of clothes, for that box communicating to the wood of the main building, then laying hold directly of the scenes, and it having been for some time very hot and dry, every thing was soon consumed. Near to us was the St Helena gardens, famous for tea-drinking, of course our business hurt their's; whether this was occasioned by their means, or by the Methodists harbouring

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about there, (which, from the threatening papers, I think most likely,) we never could discover, but it was clearly a wicked wilful business; it was evidently, as I've said, "a gunpowder plot."

He that has but one coat to his back, and is robbed of that one, suffers more inconvenience, perhaps, and feels it more than he who has ten and loses nine of them;—he still has one left;—he still has a resource, without the mortification, too, of being exposed; in an instant, after almost a year's illness, I lost my situation—a wrong time to seek for one—I had no resource; and, probably, felt this misfortune more severely, than many an eminent performer who lost twenty, ay fifty times more than I did, who belonged to Drury or Covent-Garden Theatres at the time when the similar misfortune happened of their awful conflagrations.

The China-hall landlord, having every afternoon and evening experienced the sweets of such an amazing influx of ready-money customers on the play-house account, proposed to some of us (as the manager, like Shakespeare's rats in the "Tempest," "instinctively had left us,") that he would endeavour, if we engaged to stop, to erect something like a substitute for another. Several promised to do so, because, like myself, they had no-where else to go. He employed a carpenter, we assisted ourselves; he obtained the lend of nearly a hundred pounds worth of sail-cloth, bays and canvass, and, in about a month we opened a theatrical tent, or booth, or what you please to call it. Such of the company as could procure a country engagement, and had the means to go, had, of course, left us; but we were strongly reinforced;—I need only say by a Mr Colin Mitchell, a good sound actor, from Dublin; Mr West, a natural son of Lord *Somebody's*; a Mr



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Powell, afterwards in a very respectable situation in Covent-Garden Theatre, whom I took great pains with some years before, and introduced to the stage, unlettered as he was, by his real name of Sparks; without mentioning others of merit, and our respectable ladies; to crown the whole, "though last, not least," I am impatient to say we were joined by that afterwards celebrated tragedian, the late Mr George Frederick Cooke.

I had known him some few years before, when he was of the same profession I wished to be, a compositor. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Garrick, and in one instance at least, that I've heard tell of and forbear to mention, too much so. I had heard him at spouting clubs, but this was the first time he engaged as an actor. I told him of Garrick's business and manner in some particular characters he intended to play, and I have heard, that when he arrived at the highest degree of his excellence in Covent-Garden, he was not ashamed to acknowledge, that he owed much to my hints, advice, and instructions. One night, as he was very perfect in, and wished to play the part of *Edgar*, to oblige him, I played, or went on for *King Lear!* how little I appeared in my own eyes, while I remembered in the same part, a Garrick, Barry, Powell, and Ross, the only actors of eminence, (and eminent they were,) that at that time I had seen; the play, however, was upon the whole well performed, and, considering too that it was almost in London, 'twas wonderful that we played it with great credit to ourselves, to full and genteel houses, no less than three times. But now, as before we were burnt out, so again our success was short; the winter theatres were opened, and notwithstanding our situation and great run of business, I have not the vanity to suppose, that the proprietors

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thereof would think it worth their while to interfere or notice us; we were as much below it, as I was to Garrick in *King Lear*, and both were as far as the earth is from the sun! Whether the gentlemen of the St Helena gardens, those well educated classical gentlemen, or those humane Christians, those liberally-minded gentlemen, called Methodists, who generously think that every one is damned, (more especially players) who is not of their own persuasion; in fine, be the cause what it might, we soon felt the effect. Some persons having interest with the magistrates, we were ordered to discontinue our performances, after six nights more indulgence. From the commencement of this scheme, a committee was appointed of five to conduct it; (you may laugh at the idea or word of committee, for I can't help it myself,) the five were, Dr Heard, Mr George Cooke, Mr West, Mr Newton, (uncle to the celebrated Nancy Dawson,) and my unfortunate self. There was a room appointed for us by Oldfield, the landlord of China Hall, called, the "Committee Room;" we gave Mr Newton the honour of the chair; his person not only filled it better than either of ours would do, but he was by nature and habit so very consequential, that he was called by us, Dr Pomposo. In this room, by his desire, we frequently met, like church-wardens or overseers, when we had nothing to do. Of all men in the world, Oldfield could not bear Newton; yet, as president, when he has ordered beef-steaks, porter, ale, and glasses for the "Gentlemen of the Committee," his authoritative manner was such, that Oldfield never had courage to refuse him, which I think he would have done to any one of us beside, although we were in his favour. There were two keys to our money-box, kept by Newton and Oldfield; I believe, except those

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two, neither of us saw a key but when the box was empty, and could seldom touch any of the money. At last, however, the grant of our six nights was expired, and, if we performed again, it was at our utmost peril. The major part of the company, having great confidence in the magistrates, resolving to venture on, I would not appear less timid and singular: accordingly, our play for the next night was fixed on for the "Beggar's Opera." Being apprehensive still for the event, I got out of *Peachum*, and had only *Filch* to play; my first scene being soon over, I got out of the way; they went on very well and peaceably, till *Macheath* enters with *Polly*, when as he said, "To tear me from thee is impossible," the officers rushed on the stage, (they did not mind O. P. or P. S.) saying, "Oh, no! we won't tear you from her, you shall both go together!" So seizing them, and two or three more that unfortunately were laid hold of, conveyed them off in a coach to "durance vile," where, after a hearing, in a few days they were released, and thus suddenly and shamefully ended this unsuccessful, unfortunate campaign.

Some time before this, Mr Garrick, and Mr George Garrick his brother, who was on very good terms with Mr Harris, had promised me to use their interest with him, to get me engaged in Covent-Garden theatre; Mr Garrick had therefore desired me to give him a list of a dozen of my favourite characters, which I did with what modesty I could, and all in farces, such as *Jerry Sneak*, *Davy*, *Papillion*, *Diggory*, &c. When I waited on him about this time, he told me that he had succeeded; Mr Harris had engaged me, and soon as I was ready, he had settled that I was to open in *George Barnwell*; a part so different from any I had given in my list, so opposite



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to any I wished to attempt in London, and fixed on by a Garrick, struck me speechless. Recovering from my surprise, I ventured to express my fears as to the character; in a moment, his touchwood was in a blaze. "Sir," said he, "I think my credit will be at stake as much as yours: I know you have played the part; you will be what the town has never seen in it, an old actor, and a young man; and if I am not afraid of your success, I think you need not." After this, I durst not offer another scruple: coming, however, a little into my ideas, he added, that he did not intend or advise me to stick to tragedy, for that on the second night I was to play *Jerry Sneak*; the contrast would be in my favour, doubly ensure my success in the farce, and then I was to lay tragedy aside. Notwithstanding his great confidence in me, I thought to myself that after the first night Madam Tragedy would lay me aside; or that if I passed the ordeal then, "the attempt and not the deed," on the second night, would "confound me;" for who, thought I, can play two such very opposite characters capitally, and be equally great in both? None but himself—none but a Garrick. "Indeed 'tis true what Garrick told me of." I had often played *George Barnwell* in respectable companies, but not in London; I knew the kindness and mercy of a London audience, but I was also well acquainted with their penetration and justice. I was aware, too, that it would be almost generally known, and especially in the higher circles, that I was recommended by Garrick, had been a pupil of his in Drury-Lane from childhood, and of course that greater expectations would be formed of me than I should probably be able to realize. However, there was now no retreating; I sat myself to study, not the words, children may do that, but the character

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itself more nicely and attentively than I had ever done; I rehearsed it twice before him, once when his brother George was with him; but, after a little, he asked me if I had received, since he heard me last, any instructions from his brother there? I said, "Yes, sir, twice." Said he, "I thought so, you are not the same; I desire you won't mind him, let him keep his advice and instructions to himself; do you go on your own way, and you'll have my help, when I can mend it. I shall speak to the lady who plays *Millwood*, (I believe it was Mrs Mattocks) to entreat of her to rehearse with you twice at her own house, and twice on the stage will be quite sufficient."

My hopes and confidence began now to revive, and I thought every thing was settled in a fair train; but oh, vain hope! "Who can controul his fate?" In short, Mr Garrick was taken extremely ill of his old complaint, while on a visit to Lord Spencer's, at Althorpe; he returned, however, to his house in the Adelphi, where, after a few days, he died on January 20th, 1779, and was interred with great funeral pomp, in Westminster Abbey, on the following February 1st. Eight earls and lords supported his pall, who, with many of the first nobility and eminence, attended in full seventy mourning coaches, exclusive of private carriages.

I took leave of him with unspeakable regret, on his quitting the theatrical boards; what were my feelings at his leaving, and so suddenly, this earthly stage for ever!—Two lines of Quin's epitaph, written by him, was now applicable to himself:—

"Closed are those eyes, the harbingers of wit,
Which spoke, before the tongue, what Shakespeare writ!"
"Farewell, farewell, farewell.
Monarchs, sages, peasants, must
Follow thee, and come to dust."

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In two or three weeks after, his brother also, George Garrick, died. Whether it was because I was so deeply affected by the sudden loss of both my patrons, and judging on that account, and that the season, too, was now more than half over, my application to Mr Harris would be of no avail, I cannot say, but I never did make any, though I have often regretted it since. I could not doubt any thing Mr Garrick told me, or his brother; out of respect to their memories, Mr Harris might perhaps have given me my trial, or an engagement for the next season; at the worst, I should have been but as I was; here, however, this affair, which buoyed me up so long, finally dropped.

I never did a good-natured action with such pain and reluctance, as on the day of Garrick's funeral; I'd not have lost the melancholy spectacle for my best finger; but not being acquainted with the day, I had faithfully promised some time before, to go a few miles out of town to perform for the benefit of a poor musician, who had been playing for a company there, several weeks, without receiving any emolument, and was left there with two children, involved and distressed. With difficulty I prevailed on myself to go, for I knew he could not get on without me; when it was over, and he told me he should nearly clear ten pounds, his joy and gratitude were so great, and so feelingly expressed, as made me less dissatisfied with my loss of the Adelphi procession. As I was sitting a few days after over a melancholy pint of porter at the old shop, the Black Lyon, a little whiffling fellow came bustling in, and in spite of my trouble, his dress and manner attracted my attention; a white coat and white vest embroidered and spangled; green small clothes, black hose, long beard, old cocked hat, and linen I'll not mention;

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I knew it was not Beau Nash, but I thought it might be Beau Nasty. I was seated by myself, he made up to an acquaintance of his in the room, who I found knew me; after whispering some time, they came into my box, and his friend introduced him to me, saying, "That gentleman was manager of a company (I stared) now playing about six miles off, at Dulwich; that he was distressed that night for a person to play *Justice Woodcock;* that after a week, he should open his theatre at Croydon, where the house was sure to be full every night during the fair, which lasted a fortnight, and that if I would go, he should do his utmost to make things agreeable." Thinking, at the worst, it would relieve my mind a little, after acquainting my wife, I walked off with him, and played that night; during which I could not help saying to myself, "Oh, what a falling off is here!" from the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden, to a village barn; from the certainty of receiving a handsome salary, if engaged, to the uncertainty of getting even sixpence a night, for this was a sharing company, and the first I was ever in. We then went to Croydon fair, during which we were, as he said, crammed full; after which, business gradually fell off, and we gave it up. I was prevailed on to go with them to Bromley in Kent; here, after staying with them about a month, in which I did not get above twelve shillings, I found myself obliged to leave them, and once more, with a very uneasy mind, came to London.

"But oh! how altered was the scene."

How altered were my prospects! When in London a few weeks, I gladly accepted of an offer made to me of playing with a company who had all the permission the magistrates could give, in the Borough. We had a tennis-court converted into a theatre, and

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as we had as good performers, scenery, dresses, and other decorations, as we had at China-Hall, so a similar misfortune attended us here: at the first place we were burnt out, then officially turned out; here, after playing a few nights, with increasing popularity, we were again suddenly stopped. Whether from the kindness of the magistrates or their officers, I know not, but as it was positively ordered that we should not play another night, the officers (above forty in number,) suffered themselves (when the house was crammed full,) to be locked in; the doors fast shut, we went quietly through the whole, and here again ended this business.

I had for some time corresponded with Tate Wilkinson, Esq., many years manager of the theatres-royal York, Hull, Leeds, &c. I had offered my service to him, about three months previous to this catastrophe in the Borough; he had then informed me that he should be glad to have me, and thought he could give me the opening and line of business that I wished for in about two months: I wrote to him in return, and desired him to address me at a gentleman's house, Frith-Street, Soho-Square; (not wishing him to write to me at the theatre, Dulwich, where I went at an hour's notice.) About this time, I called on my friend in Soho; he gave me a letter from York from Mr Wilkinson, which he had had nearly three weeks, but knew not to a certainty where to send it; I found it contained an offer of a very agreeable and advantageous engagement for me, and desiring, if I accepted it, to come to him immediately. I was heartily vexed at this, as I had for many years wished to be in the York company. I regret that I did not venture, even then, to go down to him hap-hazard, instead of which, I wrote to him, and explained the circumstance. By return, I re-



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ceived his letter, the first line of which I shall ever remember; "Sir, I believe the fates have decreed that we must never meet!" and indeed we never did, which I lament most feelingly; he was "a gentleman in whom I could place an absolute trust." Here I was again writ "in sour Misfortune's Book."

Having been in the vicinity of London for some time, occasionally I had played at the theatre, Haymarket, for the benefit of Mr Digges, the Scotland Roscius, Mr Jewells the treasurer, and Miss Farren, (now countess of Derby). In consequence of my having undertaken a short part for the then Miss Farren's benefit, Mr Colman, sen. condescended to come round and speak to me, and desired me to leave my name with Mr Jewell; this was considered as an engagement, and after hearing Mr Colman's words in the Green-room, respecting me, Mr Bannister, Mr Aickin, and others, wished me joy, and congratulated me.

As the first of May, in Foote's time, was the day of the company's meeting, so it was then; as the treasurer, the prompter, had my address,—as I had often waited on Mr Colman, (although I confess I never saw him, then at his house in Soho-Square,) yet I was so strongly assured of my engagement being settled, that I staid in London above two months disengaged, in full assurance of it, and if I had engaged myself for the summer elsewhere, even upon better terms, I think I might justly have been censured for not accepting Mr Colman's voluntary offer. But when we met my doubts were realized; he called me on one side, and politely told me that he could not give me any situation there for that summer. I was so astonished and confounded that I could make no reply, but walked I know not how, quietly, disconsolately home; at least, I intended to do so, but

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when I brought to my mind that my landlord would be waiting for a confirmation of what I'd told him, how disappointed and chagrined he would be at my declaring to him the truth, and that, like Belcour, "if it was to save my life, I could not tell a serious falsehood,"—saying this to myself, and reflecting that "my doors were filled with gaping creditors," I turned aside, and scarcely knowing where I was, my recollection brought to my mind that I was in Oxford-Street. I had scarcely awoke from this temporary derangement, when a genteel young fellow, seeming to know me, accosted me familiarly. It was now the month of June, and not five o'clock; he entreated, pressed, would take no denial, but I must go and take part of a pot of porter with him; I did so. I had scarcely been seated in the house three minutes, when he abruptly left me, and immediately after, in came four fellows and rudely sat down, and interrogated me; they were constables, who at that time were authorized it seemed to take up any persons on the press-gang act; they had twenty shillings for every one that passed; my youth, my hands, my features might then clearly have evinced that I had never been brought up to the sea; but no matter if they seized, as I supposed they might, at least one hundred in a day, in this promiscuous shameful manner, and only ten of them passed muster, they made a good thing of it. I was compelled to go with them to a Mr Justice Le Blanc's; he was not at home, and would not be till late in the evening; I was then conducted by these polite gentlemen, who are as well behaved as the police officers in Edinburgh, to St Giles's round-house. With difficulty I procured a bed, and a messenger to send to my wife's lodgings in Brownlow-Street, Long-Acre, to let her know my disaster. I had to wait in this pleasant situation

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till the justices met, two days: in the interim, I wrote to a Mr Woods, whom I understood was one of the commissioners, and to whom I had been known for many years: the day of trial came;

"The Judges all ranged—a terrible show!"

When asked who or what I was, I could only reply, that I was a comedian, belonging to Mr Colman, of the Theatre-Royal, in the Hay-Market. This would have answered for my acquittal, but for this litigious Mr Le Blanc; he wanted this confirmed. I was obliged to write to Mr Hitchcock, the prompter, then at the Hay-Market, whom I had formerly known at Brighton. After another elapse of a painful two days more, he came, and confirmed all that I had said; but this Le Blanc, who was, I know not why, as severe against me as Bradshaw was against King Charles, insisted upon his taking his oath, that I was at that time actually engaged at the Hay-Market Theatre. This I knew he could not do with a safe conscience, as well as himself. He was obliged to evade it. Then, having been with the appointed officer in an adjoining room, who, having kindly told me he was obliged to do his duty; and, having made his report that I was able, (though not willing,) I passed muster, and was then shewn into a large room, where, if possible, there were fifty more unhappy than myself. I have been before in many scenes, but this was the most tragical; fathers and mothers crying over a beloved son—wives weeping on a young husband—sisters fainting on their brothers' neck—all of whom, they were now about to have torn from them, without the hope of seeing them again!—in one corner, my wife and me! I endeavoured to give her, what I wanted myself—consolation.

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"Heroes and demi-gods have known their sufferings,
Cæsars have wept."

With this thought, I gave way to my grief, and let nature take her course. She had scarcely relieved me, when I was ordered again before the Justices. I expected this, as only preparatory to my being sent on board; but was agreeably surprised, when they told me I was free and discharged. I was treated by them with respect, and they advised me to secure my engagement immediately at the Hay-Market, if I could, or get into the country; at any rate, to be very cautious so as not to run the risk of being brought before them again, for in that case, as I unfortunately at present came within the meaning of the act, being young and able, and having "no visible means of a livelihood," they should not have it in their power to discharge me, consistently with their duty. The officer told me, that this was entirely owing to my friend Mr Woods, who at the last, when he found nothing else would do, was obliged to ask them, as a great favour, to release me. Well, though I was a little mortified at my being discharged from Drury-Lane Theatre, I was glad of my discharge now; I remembered the broad hint that was given me, and determined to profit by it as soon as possible. A performer, in an humble line at Covent-Garden Theatre, had told me that during their vacation he was going to join a Mr Smith, called Canterbury Smith, manager of a company then playing at Godalming, in Surrey, and that he would be happy if I would join him. I set off the very next day to him and was cheerfully received. This, like most others in those days, was only a sharing scheme, and my share, all the time I was with him, scarcely came, upon an average, to



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eight shillings a-week;—but then, my wife had a share too, for doing little or nothing, and indeed little she could do, for actors are generally paired like rabbits; so with my two shares and benefits, I could then live comfortably. We went from thence to Chertsey, where I had a great benefit, being highly in favour with the town, and had from the George Inn, at Godalming, four chaises, crammed full of friends inside and out, as though it had been election time. I left him at Weybridge, and went to Newmarket;—here our business was bad indeed—we did not share 5*s.* a-week, and no wonder perhaps—for they dragged me into all the tragedy parts, *Richard*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo*, *Jaffier*, and then *Othello*; the last I positively refused to do, but as I found the bills were partly distributed, which were printed at Cambridge, and to shut up the house would be making bad worse, I at last consented. I was *Pompey the Little*, and to make me appear still less, I had to play against an *Iago*, who stood six feet three, and when I said,

"Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,"

if he had not started and thrown out his long legs as wide as a church-door, I should never have been able to collar him. This play, however, with all *my* imperfections on its head, was bespoke again by Charles Churchill, Esq. and a very numerous party. Notwithstanding our bad business, I had no reason to complain, considering that, against my inclination, I went out of my line (and indeed we tried comedies to no use;) the public was very partial to me, and I had a great benefit. We often dismissed. I was solicited by the town and the company to take another benefit. I accordingly did, and it exceeded my first; after which we

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could muster an audience but one night more, and the manager then, afraid or incapable of prosecuting the scheme any further, broke up the company. I had received a letter, inviting me to join a Mr Fisher's corps, then finishing their season at Stowmarket, and were about going to Thetford, in Norfolk. I was told by a friend to whom I had shewn this letter, that I should not stay with them a fortnight; "For," said he, "it is not, properly speaking, Fisher's, but Scraggs' company; for he does what he pleases, and the instant that you play any low comedy-part, which is all that he dare aspire to, and even the lowest of the low is much too high for his comprehension and above his abilities, yet the moment that you attempt any character in that walk, depend upon it, that he will leave the theatre. Fisher would be, in fact, very happy at that, if he would go solus; but he and Mrs Scraggs both know, that in that case he would take Mrs Fisher along with him." This strange account was no ways pleasing to my feelings as an actor, or as a man; but as it was scarcely thirty miles off, and my wife's accouchément hourly expected, I gladly, on those accounts, accepted the offer and went. I was most cordially received, 'tis true, but soon learnt that my Newmarket friend had told me truth, and not *all* the truth. Their business had been wonderfully great, considering the shameful public misconduct of Scraggs and Mrs Fisher, who had then twice left the town clandestinely together; but being immediately pursued and overtaken by Fisher and Mrs Scraggs, their persuasions and entreaties brought them back again. I found, too, that their company was but thin, (like Gibbet's) only *three*. All their party had left them; one only still remained upon the spot, and who was this

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but my old friend Mr George Cooke! He told me he would stay no longer with such beings; he had determined, at a venture, to go off to Norwich; wished me to go with him, saying, that if I got no engagement, very probably *he* should, and was almost certain of procuring employment, in his profession as a compositor, and gave me his word that, in either case, I should receive half his income. This was certainly generous and friendly, but I could not bring myself to accept it. From the circumstances aforementioned, I soon understood that it was with difficulty at this time Fisher had got permission to play one night more in Stow, and now it was difficult to get a play done. A schoolmaster there promised to perform *Zanga*, and by my consenting to do *Alonzo*; in about a week we played the "Revenge," and "Lying Valet," to a full house. I knew that my figure and voice, (not to speak of inabilities,) were as much against me for *Alonzo* as for *Othello*, which the "Revenge" is a bold imitation of. I think I may say, that I knew how to display and manage both to the best, which, with being literally perfect, and my knowledge of the stage, was all that I had in my favour; my friend *Zanga*, too, I had taken great pains with, and was perfect to a syllable. During the play, Scraggs came to me repeatedly, expressing his surprise and pleasure at my performance; but this momentary sunshine was soon clouded. Where I felt myself at home in *Sharp*, the Lying Valet, a character which was beyond his attempting, yet foreseeing from the applause I met with, I should eclipse him soon, which was indeed a very easy matter, he determined that I should not be in his way;—my wife, too, was almost literally "in the straw," and I a stranger in the town.

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Cooke behaved as friendly to me as he could, and went off to Norwich. Fisher left me with my wife, and went to Thetford, only twenty-four miles off, and was to send to me when they were to open. Not hearing from him for a fortnight, I went there, when he made some frivolous pretence, and, to my surprise, told me positively, he could not continue my engagement. I then knew not what step to take, but I felt the unmanly motive for his conduct. In returning melancholy to my quarters to ruminate, I was luckily accosted by a friend, who remembered me at Newmarket; after dining with him, and relating my case, he immediately advised me to wait upon the mayor; told me he was a gentleman of easy access; had let the company have the town-hall gratis; was condescending, liberal, beloved and respected by all, and was sure he would see me righted. Although I felt myself unjustly and cruelly treated, yet this was a step I did not like, and in other circumstances would by no means have taken, but left Fisher and Scraggs, as heartily as I despised one and detested the other; but my wife's situation, and my own pennyless state, left me no other alternative. I reluctantly waited upon him, and soon found that he was exactly such as my friend had represented him. He presently sent for Fisher, who could make no excuse for his conduct; he was glad when he was told in, not an authoritative, but polite manner, that he might go. I was asked to tea and supper; on my taking leave, Mr Mayor slipt a paper in my hand with silver, for notes were not then so common as of late years, and desired me to breakfast the next morning. That evening he kindly went with two other gentlemen, his friends, to the theatre, and expostulated to no purpose. The next night of their performance, a party went in his name, to say that

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if they would not re-engage me, if they would let me only have a benefit, that he, a Lady Cummins, and others, would patronize three successive plays, and promote their interest after. Yet, all this would not do; Scraggs was obstinate as ignorant, and still persisted in his resolution that if I played there, he would instantly quit the company. Fisher and Mrs Scraggs felt, and well knew the consequence of this, so indeed did the town of Thetford, and every place, perhaps, for fifty miles round, from their notoriously shameful behaviour at Stowmarket. The mayor was, what every real gentleman is, a religious observer of his word, but told me the next morning, that his friends had strongly urged him to stop their playing, but that as he had given them the hall, and full permission to a certain day, unconditionally, strongly as he felt an inclination to concur with them, he would not depart from his word. They engaged then the Assembly Room for me at the White Hart Inn, where I gave readings and recitations, from Milton, Young, Thomson, Hervey, Pope, Addison, &c. foreseeing that my audience would be of the first order; I then, by desire, gave a second, with some variations. I had no room, lights, bills, music—not any thing to pay! I had the satisfaction to give general delight, and wonderfully pleased; and yet, when my abilities were compared to what any of the company possessed, it was not to be wondered at; I may say, without vanity, that I was a little star to them. My patrons were indeed so very anxious, after this, to have me engaged, that, unsolicited, unthought of, they made another application to these contemptible beings for that purpose with no better success. If perseverance in a bad cause could be called a virtue, these poor creatures possessed it in an eminent degree. Justice, humanity, gratitude, and even their own interest, and

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the advantage of the company, had no weight with them. My generous friends at length gave up the contest, and indeed 'twas more than time. It was laughable to see them and their party going into all the little public-houses, and giving tickets to boys to come into the gallery, and cry out, "No Everard!" I have been seen by them going into the residence of the first families, and these hirelings never dared offer to insult me, for they well knew that I had the first people of consequence in the town and vicinity, to support and protect me. My situation, however, was unpleasant; I did not wish, let the cause be what it would, to become so popular;

"The post of honour was a private station."

Having then received congratulations and praises that I was ashamed of, and a purse that I was glad of, I was enabled to send to my wife at Stowmarket, whose critical situation I well knew demanded all the asistance I could give her. Judging that she would not yet be enabled, with her little one, to undertake a journey, I ventured to go farther from her, to offer myself to Mr Herbert, whose company I knew was then at Lynn. As I never got an engagement in a theatre, when I really wanted one, so the negative was no disappointment to me now; I prepared myself for it. Mr Herbert told me that the company was full, and over full; that they had taken at Lynn mart, or fair, two hundred pounds less than they ever had received; in fine, there was no opening for me; he kindly slipt half a guinea in my hand, and took me into the Green Dragon Inn, then kept by a Mr Adcock, the father of Mrs Wilson, a charming little actress of great celebrity in Covent-Garden Theatre. I had been known to him at Plymouth, and he was extremely friendly; he introduced me

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that night to some gentlemen, particularly a Dr Edward Everard, the first I had ever met with exactly of my own name; his kindness and partiality towards me were great. The next day I explained my situation to Adcock, and told him that I really had not time, nor the means to stop. He bade me make myself easy and want for nothing. Indeed they did not let me; as far as my uneasy mind would permit me, I was truly comfortable there for a full week, and at coming off, Adcock told me he had no bill against me, but on the contrary put three guineas in my hand, but he would not tell me to whom I was indebted for this generosity, so with a grateful mind, I returned to Thetford. I waited directly on my best friend the mayor; he asked me if I would give out another night. I thought that I was tolerably well off, I would endeavour to keep so—I did not wish to be any further troublesome—to be away from such a scene of confusion—anxious too to get to my wife, I declined the attempt; he desired me to breakfast with him next morning, when, after telling me that the theatre was entirely deserted, wishing me success, and making me another compliment in cash, immediately I walked off, and arrived that night in Stowmarket. Here I found my wife "as well as could be expected,"—and as I had no settled spot to go to, only

> "That the world was all before me, where to choose
> My place of rest, and Providence my guide!"

Considering this, and that I could now leave my wife somewhat comfortably, I thought it best to do so, till I could procure an asylum to bring her to. I then left her the next day, and scarcely knowing which way to steer, I was directing my course towards London. At night, I heard by chance that there was a company of players somewhere about



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that quarter; this was confirmed the next day; I saw an open waggon, with a woman and two or three children at the top, some old boxes, with what appeared to be scenes and a green curtain; and to confirm and crown the whole, a drum at the head; a picture of the parapharnalia of a poor strolling company. Presently I saw the manager trudging on; I knew him, as he had been with me at China-hall. I accosted him, but he did not immediately recognize me; he only gave me a vacant stare. I knew speaking to him was of no use, for he was "deaf as a post." I pointed to his pocket for him to take out his trumpet, which was in three pieces, and which, like a sheep-bell, might be heard a quarter of a mile. After applying it to his ear, I said, "Charley Standen, don't you remember me?—Everard." His countenance brightened—he was glad to see me. I walked on with him to Billericay in Essex, about 24 miles from London, where he had got leave to play;—was very anxious for me to stop with him;—proposed to give me a share, and half a crown a night for dancing; a share also for my wife on her arrival, and seven shillings a-week beside from himself, to conduct the business for him; or, to use a high phrase, be acting manager. My wife, after receiving many civilities in Stow, soon came to me. After my performing the first night, three gentlemen, who had favoured our little theatre with their company, sent for me to the head inn to supper, and complimented me not merely in words, but with a substantial guinea. This manager, poor man, notwithstanding his deafness, was very fond of playing; particularly, *Richard* and *Othello*; which characters he would not in his own company have relinquished, however much to his profit, to the first actor on the stage, but with infinite pain and reluctance. I have been obliged to



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see him in both parts, and if the rest had played fairly to him, he was so very perfect in the whole play—was so well acquainted with the business and length of every speech, that by an audience, strangers to him, I don't think his infirmity would have been discovered; but they played tricks with him, sometimes wantonly altering a word that he had to reply upon, as in *Iago*,—"Hah!—I like not that!"—"Indeed!"—"Honest, my lord!"—"Think, my lord!"—These were wilfully changed, and made his replies sound very strange. In *Richard* the same; they would sometimes move their lips and use a little action, after they had finished their speech—he waited, and this occasioned a pause and frequently a laugh; it was of no use giving him the word, for he could not hear the drum beat, nor trumpet sound, if they had had one. I was heartily glad when we had finished; the company was so refractory, so opposite, so obstinate, so unlike comedians. Here I got from my brother, John Everard, in London, intelligence that my mother had then died at Carlisle, her native place, and where he was brought up. Here too I buried my little Stowmarket innocent. Here I received a letter of invitation from Mr James Augustus Whitley, then manager of all the theatres in the Nottingham and Gloucester circuits, to join him at Worcester; Mr William Pero was then acting manager for him *there*, and in *that* of Nottingham, Mr O'Brien. I accordingly went down to Worcester; by his desire, opened, or made my *debut*, as the fashionable phrase is now, in *Lord Ogleby*; they performed at that time in the old theatre at the bottom of the King's-head-yard. At this time, the public had, as I may say, turned their backs to it; whether it was on account of this old house being in a very bad state, and the report of a

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new theatre being about to be built, whatever cause it might spring from, the whole company felt the severe effect. This was not what was called a sharing scheme, as most were, but neither one nor t'other. There were many persons in it, particularly women, who had twelve or fifteen shillings per week paid them regularly as a salary, as not being thought worthy or capable of being ranked as a sharer, when, all the time that I was with him, nearly two years, I did not receive, at most, all that time, seven shillings a-week, and my wife to support unemployed. However, I had the honour of being a sharer! When Saturday came—no cash—"There *was honour* for you!"—And the person who the night before delivered a message to me, and with propriety unequal to *that*, could go home with fifteen shillings in his pocket, when I, who had laboured hard all the week, often sat up to study, was obliged to go home pennyless, or else be beholden to the good-natured deputy-manager, Mr Pero.

There was a Mrs Hudson in the company, our heroine, who had a salary, but not because she was not thought deserving of a share, but because she was indeed deservedly above it; whether she had two or three guineas a-week I know not, but I know that if the plan could have supported it, she fully merited that much and more. Her husband had a guinea a-week; this was a kind of tax, owing to his wife's merit; it is true that the man possessed a good figure, partly found his own stage-cloaths, had been a trumpeter, had some knowledge of music, could sing tenor or bass decently, and with all these requisites, it may be thought hard to say that he was not deserving a guinea a-week;—yes, he was, if the scheme could bear it, but it could not; and when there were actors in the company of ten times

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his merit, of which number I shall not hesitate to call myself one, who were not used to receive five shillings a-week, it was an unjust disparity, and very mortifying case.

No performer during the time made a benefit, fit to be called so, except our first singer; I should not say our first, for in fact he was our only singer. Being invited to clubs and suppers, he gave them song after song, and in the moment of conviviality got them to put down their names for a certain number of tickets, and by these means ensured a good benefit long before the time.

We went down from Worcester, to a pleasant place, called Evesham in the Vale; pleasant in itself, but not so to us. With about eighteen men performers, and twelve women, three good and constant musicians, handsome scenes, superb dresses, I did not get four shillings a-week. As I have mentioned dresses, they were not nearly so useful as Canterbury Smith's, whom I joined at Godalmin; and though in my last engagement at Billericay, with my deaf manager, I got four times the money that I did here, yet one waistcoat or robe in this company, was worth more than all their clothes, scenes, music, and properties put together.

Mr Durrivan, (the father of James Durrivan, a favourite comedian some years afterwards at Bath,) a man, like Tom Weston, possessed of a happy dry humour, made me laugh heartily one night, when I observed to him that he had got on a most elegant rich suit of clothes; "Ay," said he, (lifting up the flap of his vest which covered his knees, and the crimson velvet could scarcely be seen for the gold lace and spangles,)—"Ay, starving in pomp!" Simple as this may appear, had the reader heard and seen him, I think he would have laughed too.

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The deputy-manager having frequently wrote to Mr Whitley at Worcester, explaining the state of the company, to no purpose, at last deposited a small parcel of the wardrobe for thirty pounds, divided it amongst us, and made a finish. We then went to Warwick, where we hoped for some success, on the account of an approaching election, and sure of it at the assizes. The first did nothing for us, but luckily for me, my benefit falling on the day after Sir George Shuckburgh was elected, I obtained the honour of his name and patronage. Then the assizes came, but to our great surprise and mortification, Mr Whitley, the manager from Worcester, came also! The business here was nearly as bad as at Evesham; but now, for a week, the house was cramm'd full every night, and he took all the money and cramm'd his large pockets full every night! We waited all with impatience, especially the sharers, for the end of the week, which put an end to our hopes, for he rode off with nearly four hundred pounds, and left us without a shilling.

We were led then to Gloucester. The business was better, but the sharers' income not much increased; yet the company being in good repute, our credit was good, and the inhabitants extremely sociable; indeed, almost too much so; but they have been so much harassed of late years, that they are somewhat altered in that respect, as well as the times. We continued there six months, yet all the benefits answered well, and I had every reason to be grateful for mine.

The theatre being now built and ready for us at Worcester, off we went in high expectations; but after the novelty of a new theatre had been gratified, it visibly fell off. I felt that there was, as usual, nothing to be got—saw that it would be a



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long season—that summer was not the time for Worcester, and that there was a poor prospect of a benefit; in fine, being tired of my manager and playing for nothing, I gave him up in due form, and shortly after went down again to Brighton.

Here again with my old manager, Fox, I passed a laborious, yet pleasant summer as usual; my only hope of being rewarded, was in the prospect of a benefit, which once more very well answered. As he then kept a tavern well situated in Bow-street, close to the principal entry of Covent-Garden Theatre, when that was shut during the summer and business was dull, the Brighton scheme suited his purpose extremely well, but he carried it on no further, so then every one had to shift for themselves. This season towards the conclusion, the manager of Portsmouth came here and engaged, beside myself and wife, about eight more. Mr Thornton, our prompter *then*, suggested to us, that with the children, as we were nearly eighteen in all, as coaches did not run then, and chaises would be very expensive, it would be a frugal plan to engage a vessel; we readily agreed with a master who had often been, and well knew the coast. His little ship lay on the burning sands in a very hot summer, and some wags of the town, great friends to us no doubt, hearing of our agreement with this captain, contrived for almost three weeks to prevent him from doing his duty to us, in looking after the vessel, by keeping him, out of fun, in a continual state of inebriety, till within a few hours of our sailing; the wind serving, this took place about ten o'clock at night, beginning of November. She had scarcely touched the sea before we felt the danger we were in; soon after it became very alarming; the water poured in at her seams—the master insensibly drunk,

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we were left to the mercy of his man and boy; one would not and the other could not do any thing. In this extremity the captain was laid hold of, and after threatening to throw him overboard first, before we all went to the bottom, if he did not endeavour to put us back, he produced a pair of large oars, which we all heartily tugged at, till, with great difficulty, we providentially brought her safe to shore. Some of the townsmen, knowing the state that the master and vessel were in, grew very anxious for our safety; in particular, a landlady of Mr Thornton's, who had a great respect for him and his family. She dreamt that we were in imminent danger—waked in a fright and told her husband the cause—he laughed at her, and she composed herself again to sleep; she soon after awoke, and had again dreamt that we were going to the bottom, and that she heard Mrs Thornton's screams in her ears. When I went below into what may be supposed the cabin, it was indeed an awful sight to see Mrs Thornton with her young family about her, up to her knees in water, with a child upon each; my wife and Mrs Sparks Powell, pale as death, resigned like "Patience on a monument;" I almost became insensible of my own situation. This good woman the landlady, strongly possessed with this idea of our danger, instantly rose and roused some neighbours who came down to the beach with lights and torches raised upon poles; it was extremely dark, and the man afterwards declared that if we had gone out to sea a mile farther, and had not wonderfully had the guide of lights, we must inevitably have been lost. After this we were too dispirited to undertake another voyage, we engaged therefore a kind of caravan and four, trusting to terra-firma, and in two days we were all safely landed in Portsmouth.

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The first night we opened, I was left out of play and farce, to dance between, as I was engaged to do occasionally; after which, as a good hornpipe is sometimes more thought of than a good play in a sea-port town, they encored mine: a circumstance I never knew or heard of before. I would not comply till after they had attempted three times, in vain, to begin the farce, and could not withstand any longer, without endangering the safety of the house. I thought this engagement likely to prove a profitable one, having not only a good salary for myself, and my wife employed, but when we played more than three nights a-week, had the addition of *half* salary; so that when we performed every night, the person who had but one guinea a-week received a guinea and a-half; this was very soon the case, and if it was fatiguing, it was accordingly rewarded. The house was nearly full almost every night, but a very turbulent noisy audience, when the fleet or much shipping was in, and frequently a whole evening's performance would be gone through, and not ten lines distinctly heard from beginning to end. *That* might suit an indifferent or imperfect actor very well, but was enough to spoil a good one. Our situation on the stage, from being often rendered unpleasant, was sometimes dangerous; apples and oranges we got pretty well used to from their frequency of appearing; but when our unthinking spectators would sometimes salute us with a potatoe, or even a pint or quart bottle, it was above a joke. Half that came did not know what it was to be—it was a play, and that was enough. We could not, however, but observe that in general our tragedies, such as *Macbeth*, *Richard*, and *Hamlet*, brought us much better houses than our comedies, and still

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more remarkable, they were not so clamorous. One night, we were playing Sheridan's elegant comedy of the "School for Scandal," of which not three words were heard, till, in the 3d act, *Charles* was discovered with his companions, drinking; upon which, many of the sailors from the gallery got round to the slips over the boxes, and dropt themselves down upon the stage till it was filled, coming up to *Charles*, exclaiming, "My eyes, you're a hearty fellow! Come, my tight one, hand us a glass!" We were obliged to drop the curtain, and use all the fair means we could think of, for we knew foul or forcible efforts would not do. At length, with a deal of persuasion, after permitting them to send for half a dozen bottles, and helping to empty them, they were prevailed on to resume their seats; but they were as noisy during the remainder of the play as at first; yet upon all occasions where there was dancing or a pantomime, they were silent among themselves and attentive to us, as we wished them to be at other times.

We continued to go on thus, with every prospect of great success till the beginning of January, when in half an hour, "the case was altered." A young midshipman standing with others, in the pit, the door half open, our hair-dresser's man, about the 4th act, was coming in a hurry to attend some performer for the farce; in going along the narrow pit-passage, (our way to the stage,) he happened to press the pit-door against this midshipman, who immediately turned round and knocked him down; the barber rose and attempted to apologize, he was knocked down again; not content with that, the midshipman drew his dirk upon him: the poor affrighted fellow called out "Murder!" At this instant, our carpenter, hearing the

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outcry, and running into the passage, seeing the barber on the ground, and this officer standing over him with his dirk drawn, innocently cried out, "Bless me, sir, what do you use the man so for?" "Oh," exclaimed the other, with an oath, "I'll use you ten times worse!" He accordingly did: for he directly thrust at him with his dirk, which passed clear through the upper part of his left arm, and deeply entered his breast; he languished above four days and died! After his committing this mad action, he shewed no signs of horror or compunction at the deed, but, with great unconcern, went with his companions to supper at the Fountain Inn; but he was soon disturbed by the officers of justice, who that night lodged him in the town gaol, called the White House. The surgeons had declared the poor young man's wound to be mortal, as it proved. The magistrates the next day had the midshipman and many others to pass through his room, to see if he could be recognised; he *was*, as soon as seen by the unfortunate youth, after several had passed the ordeal; said he, "You are the person who has given me my death, but you could not mean it; I'd done you no harm, and may the law, and may God forgive you as I do." He was then taken to Winchester, and tried; where the law indeed acquitted him, and a shameful acquittal it was—fined only one shilling! not even a month's imprisonment. The judge did his duty, but the jury were glad to get away. Several held up their heads pretty high afterwards, who before scarcely possessed a shilling. The young midshipman had very great connections, in particular, was nephew to two admirals, and said to be a son of the unfortunate Miss Ray, who was shot by the Reverend Mr Hackman, and for which he suffered.

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We were at that time playing in the old theatre, and in consequence of this unhappy affair, the magistrates would not suffer it to be opened again as a theatre, nor has it, I believe, ever since. This was only the middle of January, and the new theatre was let to, and rented by the ladies and gentlemen of the town, for their balls and assemblies, till the beginning of May, a pretty long vacation. Another of fortune's strokes; or rather the midshipman's, for though he struck but at the carpenter, yet I severely felt the blow. Excuse me for having hinted at this circumstance in a former page.

Our company was soon pretty well dispersed. With a few more, I was prevailed upon to stay the opening of the new house. In the interim, the magistrates considering our case, allowed us, at the old, to give a mixed entertainment, a few nights, by way of Concert; but this was not sufficiently attractive to draw the attention of the public, and our profits were but small. When the new theatre opened, the town was empty, the fleet out; but for *that* accident, our benefits would have been much sooner, and every one have benefited by it; now, I had but barely the expenses in the house, and several lost pounds by it.

A Mr Stow, dancing-master, and Mr Kent, owner of the Goat public-house, had built a pretty theatre, about a half-mile out of town. Mr Perry, many years of Covent-Garden Theatre, had for some time been engaged with the Portsmouth manager, but had a breach with him, too wide ever to be closed, and he was engaged as their acting-manager. They called theirs the "Sadler's Wells Theatre," being upon that plan, singing, dancing, tumbling, slack-wire, rope-dancing, interlude, and pantomime. I could at that time be very useful, and

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they made me an offer of seemingly a profitable engagement. Considering that at the request of my former manager, I continued in Portsmouth above three months disengaged, how often in the course of the business I had served him by going out of my line, and doing much more than my duty; reflecting that I had no reason to be satisfied with his conduct, I thought myself fully justified in leaving him, and accepting the offer made me by the managers of Sadler's Wells.

Their theatre opened with every prospect of success, and had it; but at the comencement a national calamity befell;—the sudden loss of the Royal George man of war. In consequence of which, as I have said, our theatre here, and in Portsmouth and Gosport, were shut. When we re-opened, the boxes and pit presented to us a very sombre appearance; all as if it was a general mourning. On the second night, as though the gallery people were resolved to raise a laugh from the audience, which at that time, with all our efforts, we could scarcely extort ourselves, they came pre-determined to have some fun; accordingly they did not want for ammunition; they came provided, not with bags of black powder, but white flour; a certain number thus in the secret, they were to wait on the agreed signal from their captain, which I dare say they did very impatiently. As I've said, we played musical interludes and farces; our first piece was that night, "No Song, no Supper;" when *Lawyer Endless* was brought out of the sack, his black cloaths covered with flour, and the audience enjoying the scene, this captain as they styled him, roared out, "My eyes, but you shan't have all the fun to yourselves; hand some of it here." Upon which, he and his party, who were dispersed in the front seats of the gallery and side-slips, all at



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once emptied their flour-bags over the ladies and gentlemen in the boxes, who instantly made as whimsical an appearance as *Endless* on the stage; this caused a confusion, and a roar of laughter from all but those who were annoyed; but they knew there was no redress, that the best way was to be quiet, so after looking at each other, they found themselves obliged to join in the laugh, and compose themselves as well as possible. From this circumstance, however, our boxes and pit wore their usually gay appearance, very few putting on black, fearing they should be saluted with a contrast colour.

We then went on with our accustomed success, playing every night in the week, to forty, fifty, sixty, seventy pound houses, the performances varying, but seldom the pantomime, which was given above seventy nights. They had, what I was sincerely glad of, a much better *Harlequin* than myself; I had the *Lover* to do, which, with always playing in an interlude and farce, I found, with occasionally dancing, a sufficient fatigue. They had an excellent *Clown*, a charming *Columbine*, capital scenes, good vaulters, good carpenters, and no wonder that they had good business. Towards the end of the season, I had, with most, a great benefit; but here, as in Portsmouth Theatre, we had no sooner closed, than the anxiety and fatigue fell suddenly on me, and I lay dangerously ill for many weeks; at which time, too, my wife, at an unlucky time, had another accouchement. We were both attended gratuitously by Dr Johnson; he spoke of us to Lady Lennox, who generously sent me two guineas and wine for my wife; by his kindness, I had unlooked-for presents from many others. On my recovery, I found that Perry, the acting manager, had died suddenly; that they were all in confu-



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We then went on with our accustomed round, playing every night in the week, to full houses, seventy pound houses, the performance varying, but seldom the pantomime, which remained seventy nights. They had, what I conceive, more of, a much better *Harlequin* than the present, to do *Lover* to do, which, with short intervals, lude and farce, I found, [illegible] a sufficient fatigue. The [illegible] a charming *Columbine*, [illegible] good [illegible] and [illegible] busin[illegible]

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sion, and that there was every reason to suppose that their winter season would not be nearly so productive as the summer had been. I imagine they felt and thought so too; as the proprietors informed me, if I wished to re-engage, that they should reduce all the salaries. Being not very well pleased at this, and tired with the tumults, misfortunes, and troubles of Portsmouth, I willingly changed the scene, and accepted of an offer made me to join the Nottingham company, then at Leicester. I accordingly set off to London, and then down to them; Whitley, the manager of this, whom I was with at Worcester and Glocester, was dead, and Mrs Gosley, a daughter of his, residing at Stamford, carried on both concerns, and Mr. O'Brien in this circuit was her acting manager. I soon found this resembled the Worcester scheme, nothing to be got, "starving again in pomp!" In this company, too, I had some unthought-of mortifications, occasioned by four powerful parties against me: one acknowledged I had merit, but said, I ought never to attempt tragedy; another, that the fops and geentel comedy were certainly out of my line; a third affirmed, that I might pass in these, but when I performed *Scrub*, or any other low comedy part, it was contemptible; a fourth was jealous of my Harlequin and dancing; so in fact, though all allowed me some merit, yet on the whole, not any; and every night, I was sure to prove an eye-sore to one party or the other. I had among them, however, a friend or two on my side, who used to give me these informations. O'Brien, the manager, having heard that I had played *Bowkitt*, the dancing-master in O'Keeffe's musical farce of the "Son-in-law," with some reputation, particularly at Brighton, no less than fourteen nights one summer, gave the part up to me; he had attempted it twice before my

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arrival, but was as unfit for it as I was for *Falstaff*, or *Cardinal Wolsey*; I played it afterwards four nights which increased my credit with the town, and the envy of the parties. I had been scarcely a month there, before they had to throw, as was customary, for the benefits. I wished to decline, alleging the short time I had been in the company, and that there was no partner to go with me, and a single benefit, which I had always before, was, in this company, on no account allowed; then being told that the nights were all fixed, and that I could possibly have no other chance, at last reluctantly I consented, and, as ill chance would have it, won the first night. As I had purposely been lain on the shelf, a little vanity, more than the hopes of gain, urged me on to venture; the trouble and any additional expense I knew must be all my own, and, if there should be any profit, I had to share it with an undeserving set; I therefore took no pains about it. I flattered myself that I should have an opportunity of shewing myself to some advantage, which, in the end, might answer some end, and that I should have the secret satisfaction of mortifying them a little in my turn. As I foresaw, so it fell out: there was hardly the bare nightly charges. After playing *Touchstone*, *Young Philpot*, and dancing I went home pennyless. I had lodged and boarded with an old woman, who kept a creditable public-house; she was at the play; I was unavoidably in her debt; I never was more cast down and dispirited; I could with difficulty muster courage to open the door. When I entered, I shall never forget my reception. I believe she saw my backwardness: "Come, come along," says she; "bless your dear little legs." This was a wonderful cordial to my drooping spirits: I never stood in greater need of one; but she nor her husband would

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be satisfied, till out of his friendly bottle I had taken two cordials; then told me there was a little fowl just boiled and ready for my supper; not to be uneasy about any thing, but make myself comfortable; adding, "I see now plainly the reason of some of them backbiting you, but they will be glad now, to come cap in hand to you." Her words proved true; for next morning early, two of my greatest enviers waited on me, to request that I would play a particular character, and dance for their benefit the next night: My good landlady told them their own. I confess, I secretly triumphed in my turn, and then, being fully satisfied, complied with every one's desire till the last night: the manager told me next morning, that all the scenes and dresses must be taken down and packed up and sent to Stamford the next day, but that as I had had no benefit, and done so much for the company, they had all made an offer to stop and play next night gratis, for my benefit, if, under such circumstances, I could do any thing. I gave out and performed the "Stratagem" and "Lying Valet," to about ten pounds, under every disadvantage, and my whole expences did not amount to ten shillings. I went off on Sunday, and on the Monday opened at Stamford for the races. I had left my wife unwell at Portsmouth; soon as able, she went with her infant, and staid at her father's till it died; she then came down to me at Stamford; soon after, we went to Kettering, where I was worse off than ever,—could scarcely get a shilling; we soon returned to Stamford assizes, but finding the Nottingham company, as this was then called, upon the same unequal plan as the other termed the Worcester company, I offered my service to Fox, which was readily accepted, and again went down to Brighton. Here we went on as usual, and, as usual,

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I had a good benefit; here, too, I was favoured with the Assembly Room, by Mr Hicks, at the Ship Inn, by having a concert, under the patronage of many ladies and gentlemen. By this, it was high time to look out for an asylum for winter; I was somehow always backward in that; however, one presented itself to me, unsought for. Mr Staunton, then manager of a respectable company, and in possession of many good towns, wished me to join him at Litchfield; sensible that it was where my great master was brought up, and that his brother, Mr Peter Garrick, was still living there, to whom I was well known from childhood, I readily accepted his offer, and soon as we closed at Brighton, gladly went down to Litchfield. Here it was a proper sharing company: good, bad and indifferent, Lord Townly and servant all upon an equality respecting income, and a poor income it was. I opened in *Lissardo*, in the "Wonder," on November 3d, and played there till the beginning of May; for as he had then a very large family, it was his custom to take a house for six months, and spin out the time, if possible. Litchfield, being a cathedral city, it may readily be supposed that they were great admirers and good judges of music. This was not in the manager's favour; not one of all his family, not even his favourite daughter Miss Staunton, (afterwards Mrs Goodall,) was musically inclined. As to himself, he was "an utter enemy to harmony;" and as for a son of his, he sometimes used to go on for comic singing characters, such as *Sir Harry Sycamore*, in the "Maid of the Mill," and *Don Scipio*, in the "Castle of Andalusia;" parts which may not require, 'tis true, a fine voice, but the songs are far from easy, and the performer should certainly have an ear to time and tune. As to the



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first, he had no idea of a symphony, and as to tune, he did not know the difference between the "Maid of Lodi," and "Hey, down-derry down." We had a pretty full company, but not sufficiently good for Litchfield; we were likewise playing all the old pieces, the manager either reserving the new ones which he was possessed of for their own benefits, or not caring to produce them, as there were not perhaps parts in them to please himself, his wife and family. All these things considered, it cannot be surprising that a judicious city like Litchfield, having no novelty offered, no attraction held out to them, no seeming exertions to draw them from their tea-tables, should prefer sitting comfortably in their own houses, in the depth of winter, to coming into a cold play-house to see—what?—the "Stratagem" and the "Miller of Mansfield." We went on from bad to worse, till at length we played above three weeks without receiving a shilling. Although this was a hard case with *all*, yet it was peculiarly so with those upon whose shoulders the weight of all the business lay; therefore we came to a resolution not to *play*, or rather not to *work* any more without a certainty of getting something. The next night, another old play as usual, "A Bold Stroke for a Wife." I had the long and troublesome part to play of *Col. Feignwell*, and *Sharp* in the "Lying Valet," a very fatiguing night's business; not only with the certainty of afterwards going home pennyless, but even brought in debt my share for the deficiency of charges; we were, however, ready when the manager desired us to begin, which I had to do. As that and the principal parts fell to my lot, I could not avoid the painful task of being spokesman, by saying, "Pray, Mr. Staunton, how much may there be in the house?"

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"Eighteen shillings, sir." I said, "You won't have two more to-night—surely you won't think of performing?" "Yes, sir, I make it a rule never to dismiss, if there's ten shillings." "I have played," said I, "long enough for nothing—I will not go through this night's fatigue on the same plan—I don't know who's in the house." "Nor shall I," added my colleague, "go on the stage without Mr Everard." "Oh, very well, gentlemen," says the manager, "I see how it is—a combination." He immediately went into the pit, and bluntly told them there could be no play, I would not perform; upon which Capt. Dyott and Capt. Elliot then came round and asked for me. I told them the case, not of mine only, but the whole company.—that I did not know till then who were there, but as they and the ladies with them wished us to perform, we would by no means disappoint them, but begin in three minutes; we accordingly did, and had not five shillings beside their party. When it was over, these gentlemen came round again, thanked us, and politely made me a compliment of three guineas to divide among the company, not including Mr Staunton's family. I believe this had a good effect in more than one sense. We very soon began our benefits, and though some were better to be sure than others, yet they were all good; for they liberally and humanely talked in this manner:—"We must go to-night to his, or her benefit; capital in their line—gone through a multiplicity of business—I've received great pleasure from them—they've had a long winter—thin houses—let their merit meet with some reward." The next night,—"Well, we must go—indeed he's no great actor, but he's very useful, and is always clean and perfect." Next evening,—"Well, I'll not go to night, but

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I'll send for tickets and give them away; to be sure, he does little more than deliver messages, but the great wheels can't work without the little ones, and the *Apothecary* wants to eat as well as *Romeo.*" Respecting my own benefit, the town was pleased to think it little better than a failure; for *my* part, although I had no reason to be dissatisfied, yet I confess I was disappointed, for there was so much talk about it, that it fell above twenty pounds short of every one's expectations. Lady Gen. Elliot left a guinea for me with the worthy Dr Salt, for her ticket. Several other ladies left a compliment for me at different houses, observing, that they were afraid of coming to the theatre that night, every body saying that it would be so very crowded, that it really would be dangerous.

Under the idea that my benefit had failed, I was strongly advised and powerfully encouraged to engage, if I could, an elegant room, called the Vicar's Hall, and give out my recitations. Upon enquiry, I found that the reverend gentlemen of this Hall, having given the use of it to a Mr Walker for a philosophical lecture, in the course of which, by accident, his apparatus had injured the room; particularly, broke one of the girandoles which Garrick had presented to the Hall, that they had determined never to permit the grant of it more. This difficulty was, however, soon got over, by the Reverend Dr Buckeridge and twelve other gentlemen most cordially giving me their consent. Our Litchfield company had by this time gone to Walsall, ten miles off, and I was so stupid, or so confident perhaps of my success, that I asked assistance from none of them—I was *myself alone!* On the night, the Hall was crowded with my patrons and



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friends, the first people in and near Litchfield,—Lady Smith, the Hon. Miss Vyse, Mr Howard, Capt. Dyott, Capt. Elliot, Mrs Gen. Elliot, Miss Seward (authoress), Mr Peter Garrick, Mr Doxey, Mrs Doxey (David Garrick's sister), Mrs Simpson, Dr Salt, Dr Green, with most of the worthy reverend gentlemen who had freely granted me the Hall, and many others, whose names, even at this distance of time, I think myself almost ungrateful not to remember, but their kindness, however, I still retain. I was surprised to see fifteen carriages at the door, when I knew most of them were so adjacent, but some had been for friendly parties two or three times. As almost every one present had heard Garrick speak his "Ode in honour of Shakespeare," at Stratford Jubilee, or in Drury-Lane Theatre, I felt a deal in the attempt. When all was over, Mr Peter Garrick and Miss Seward, with many others, came to me, when he condescended to address me with, "Sir, I am desired by these ladies and the company to tell you in a few words, that plainly we came here, having adopted this plan merely to make up for your benefit, which we did not think, by any means, a sufficient remuneration for your trouble and merits; in fact, we came here to confer, if I may call it so, a little favour upon you, but you have disappointed us—the tables are turned—you have surprised and obliged us. We regretted that you had put so much into your bill, to give yourself so much trouble, yet I think now, if you had gone on an hour longer, we should all very cheerfully have staid; and I am particularly glad that they all agree with me in declaring, that in the recitation of the Ode, although your voice is not so good, yet, 'bating *that*, you speak it full as well as my brother did."

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This was certainly "more their goodness than my desert;" in other words, I am confident that their politeness and good nature got the better of their judgment; but, be it as it may, if they were content with my humble efforts to please, I had more substantial reasons to be satisfied with their generosity. I now returned to my head-quarters at Walsall. This was a widely-different place to Litchfield; the first, a capital trading town, the nursery of Birmingham and Sheffield; Litchfield, chiefly inhabited by the reverends of the cathedral and persons of independent fortunes; though only a short ten miles apart, they were in their customs and manners as opposite as two kingdoms. Respecting the theatrical world, it was just the same, for the tragedian who would deservedly be laughed at in Litchfield, would not only pass current, but be applauded to the skies in Walsall. As to comedians, or what we term low comedians, any one would do. Macklin said to a friend, "Did you ever see or hear a person hissed in *Scrub* or *Davy*, in 'Bon Ton?'" "No, sir." "No, I suppose not, nor I neither; but I have seen many a one who richly *deserved* it; why not as well as in 'Hamlet?'—only the characters themselves, play them how you will, cannot but make the gallery-people laugh, the politer parts of the house won't interfere; and then these poor creatures think themselves actors, and call themselves low-comedians—low indeed they are—too low—below *my* notice."

Indeed I soon experienced here a different behaviour and treatment from the manager to what he showed me at Litchfield; such, in fact, as he would not venture to give me there, rough and rude as he was in his most polished moments.

At Litchfield he was compelled to procure the

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best company that he possibly could; for instance, the season before I went, he engaged Mr. Penn to play the principal characters in tragedy. I never saw that gentleman, but when I can aver that he played in the Theatre-Royal, Bath, upon nearly an equality with the justly-admired Mr Henderson, I think *that* a sufficient stamp. When I objected to going on for one of the Gypsies in the "Maid of the Mill," (as his son, without a single requisite for the part, went on for *Sir Harry Sycamore*,) he told me that Mr Penn had played *Othello* there, and afterwards gone on for a servant in the "Irish Widow." I said, more shame for him to require it, and the other a fool to do it. I was an affront too to the audience, as it must give the thinking and feeling part a sense of pain, to see a valuable and first-rate actor so metamorphosed, and besides, *they* unnecessarily waiting half an hour before he could well change himself, when at the same time there were several unemployed, fit only to deliver a message, and perhaps not competent to do that. I added too, that I was under no obligation to him, whereas he had advanced Mr Penn twenty pound to join him, and held his note like a sword over his head, ungenerously and cruelly to keep him in awe.

I now resolved to get out of this sharing company, and never enter into another if possible. Accordingly I wrote to Mr James Millar, manager of Shrewsbury. I accepted his terms, but he was not to open there till six weeks after we finished at Walsall. To fill up this time, I got engaged for Buxton with Mr Welch, then manager. I told him fairly my case, and before I left him, he gave me a benefit, which I had no right to expect. I then went to Mr Millar at Shrewsbury. He intended to open with Miss Lee's comedy of the "Chapter of

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Accidents," and I was to perform *Jacob Gawky*, a part that most comedians are ambitious of: but as I never considered, like many, what was the best part, but what I was fittest for, and could play best, and it being a character, principally on account of the dialect, that I could not fancy myself in, I begged leave to decline it, as I had before, both at Brighton and Portsmouth. He exclaimed with surprise, "Oh, fie, fie, for shame, sir!" (a common phrase of his,) "Not play *Jacob!*" Considering that from the line I was engaged in, that I had indeed no right to object to it, and that I had then seen two or three in the part, who were not perhaps better qualified than myself, on his kindly agreeing to put off the play till the second night, I could not but consent: After it was over, he came to me saying, "There, sir, there! You was afraid of playing *Jacob*; I saw how it would turn out; you are the best I ever saw in it,—you've borne all before you; you've carried the play on your shoulders." Shortly after, I went one morning into the Green-Room, as we termed it, and looking at the papers which were put up there, as usual, containing a list of the plays, and how they were cast, intended for the next week's business; I saw among others, "The Merchant of Venice," and my name down for *Shylock*. I expostulated with him, and begged leave to decline that also: "Why," said he, "you have played *Shylock*, I know." "Yes, sir, but not by choice, and not in Shrewsbury, and I am well aware, that they are a very particular and critical audience." "Fye for shame, sir; this is a second edition of your *Jacob Gawky*,—you are the modestest man I ever knew." Well, I played it to a respectable, but a thin house; the night after, he was in company with some of the first gentlemen in the first inn: they knew his spirit and manner, and greatly respected him; he

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soon reproached them with not supporting the theatre, saying, " they had formerly excused themselves, because there was not a good company; surely they could not say so now; if any there was at the theatre the night before, to see the 'Merchant of Venice,' he was sure they must agree with him." Indeed the whole play, (always excepting myself,) was certainly highly respectable; the women, capital. Mrs Dawes was lively and spirited in *Nerissa*, and, agreeable to the theatrical phrase, an excellent breeches-figure. Mrs Richards, (mother of Mrs Edwin,) was possessed of a beautiful figure and voice for *Jessica*. Mrs Bulkley was the best *Portia*, upon the whole, I then had ever seen; I say upon the whole, because I have witnessed many great actresses fall very short of the character, in one part or the other. Mrs Abington, that eminent lady, deservedly stiled the " Comic Muse," she was herself in *Portia*, while she was *Portia*; but when she came to the trial scene, it was a trial of skill beyond her powers, she had lost herseif. Her *Lady Townly* was perhaps the truest and most finished picture of the unthinking lady of fashion that the stage ever boasted, till the last scene; then, where a Mrs Barry or a Mrs Yates drew tears from the audience, Mrs Abington's attempt was nearly ludicrous. Indeed the characters of *Portia* and *Lady Townly*, require a lady possessed of almost tragic talents, as well as the first-rate comic abilities in high life; Mrs Bulkley had both these in perfection, a remarkably well made figure, expressive countenance, good voice, brought up a dancer, " grace was in all her steps," not unacquainted with the manly accomplishment of fencing, and I have seen her perform *Hamlet* even in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh, in a style of excellence



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that very few men could surpass. If, after this, I may be credited, it may well be thought that our "Merchant of Venice" was done with more than mediocrity. One of the gentlemen then told Mr Millar that he had seen it the last night; that they in that play, had been used to look up to the *Shylock*, as they would to see who played *Richard*, *Hamlet*, or *Macbeth*; for unless characters like them were well supported, though the others might fill their lines with propriety, yet unless the principal characters were equal to their task, the play must sink; with this idea, they went to the theatre, and although they had entertained a very favourable opinion of me from what they had seen, they conceived that I was inadequate to the part of *Shylock*, and, perhaps, that was the cause of their having so thin an audience; that he and a few more were agreeably disappointed by my performance, and that he was authorised to say, that when the manager would repeat the play, they should all attend. We performed it afterwards to a full house, with every mark of approbation.

This Mr Millar, the manager, I was told in Whitley's company, of the Nottingham and Worcester theatres, was in the humble capacity of a stage-keeper with him in his juvenile days; be that as it may, he was a gentleman when I met him. He had some property left him, he married a lady of some fortune, he possessed an elegant seat at Retford, in Nottinghamshire, and was manager, only, of the theatre, in Shrewsbury, for some years, more I believe for an amusement, than from any idea of profit.

As a gentleman-manager, I'll beg leave to relate one circumstance:—When we had performed a week or two, some of the company were very negligent in coming to the rehearsals, and without which being strictly regarded, nothing can be done

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by the greatest actors living. They, without that attendance, must unavoidably fall below themselves, and incapable of giving that satisfaction to the public, which otherwise, their merit would entitle them to;—a stupid or imperfect *Catesby*, or *Ratcliffe*, would destroy a Kemble, a Kean, or a Booth! Some of our regular performers in Shrewsbury complained to the manager openly, of the non-attendance of others, and advised him, by all means, to establish *forfeits*, as customary in salary companies. His reply was,—"Oh, fie; fie for shame, gentlemen;—no, you are most of you here now: I shall only say from this, that those ladies and gentlemen who in future attend to rehearsals, and discharge their duty, will be considered by the public and myself, and (setting their own interest and reputation apart), will be held in just estimation, let their rank in the theatre be what it may; and, if there are any in this company, after this, who forget what they owe to an indulgent public, to the manager, and themselves, there shall be no forfeits exacted, but they will be looked upon by the manager and the respectable part of the community, not as comedians, but as barn-door strollers." This liberal address had its full and proper effect. From that time the negligent part of the company were shamed into attention, and there was no cause for complaint in future on *that* subject. Mr Millar was very fond of playing, particularly such parts as *Lord Ogleby*, *Mercutio*, and *Dr Prattle*; like Mr Gibson and Mr Hull, of Covent-Garden and Liverpool, he was more respected as a man than admired as an actor. In *Mercutio*, he evinced the scholar more than the comedian. In *Dr Prattle*, which he was then famous for, and which he played that season with great reluctance, out of compliment to me, he was, I must

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confess, much short of what I expected to see; I could not but remember the great original, Mr King:

> "Oh, there be players that I have seen play,
> And heard others praise, and that loudly too," &c.

Yet he was far beyond them whom I have seen attempt the part, whose merit in it was only that they were perfect, but spoke so very fast, that even to a small audience, they were unintelligible. I prevailed on him to play *Lord Ogleby* for my benefit, urging that he was celebrated there in that character, and that by leaving myself out of the play, I could give some recitations between the acts, or dance, without changing dress, and detaining the audience. He was afterwards vext at this compliance, as he was but ill supported by a young Irish actor who played *Canton*, the Swiss, and I had no great reason to be pleased, as I had but barely the charges of the theatre in the house.

As a generous manager, I'll not relate what I've heard of him, only one circumstance while I was with him:—A young man in the company having but eighteen shillings a-week was allowed by him (by way of benefit), to *take tickets*, as it is termed, it being a very safe plan, having nothing to do with the charges and expenses of the theatre, and running no risk. To those unacquainted with its customs it may be necessary further to explain, that in this case half the value of the tickets they sell that come into the house should be paid to the manager, and the other half, be what it might, was for their own benefit. This young man sent in five pounds in tickets, which he had been under the necessity of making use of. The day after we finished, Millar gave notice he should stay at home all

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day to settle accounts with the company. This performer not attending, he was sent for, and I had great difficulty to encourage and prevail on him to go. When he returned to me, I understood this curious dialogue had taken place:—"Well, Mr Cooper, I'm glad to see you; you are now the last person that I have to settle with; let's proceed to business. The half of your ticket-money to me is L.2, 10s., and two guineas I lent you on your arrival here, make together L.4, 12s. due to me. I suppose you can now discharge it?" "Indeed, sir, I am sorry to say that I cannot; I have not five shillings in the world." "Fie for shame, sir; very pretty, sir; and I suppose you owe money in the town too?" "No, sir, upon my word; I don't stand indebted sixpence to any one." "Well, sir, what do you mean to do with yourself; have you got any engagement to go to?" "Indeed, sir, I have not; all I can think of is, to try somehow to get up to London and look out for one." "Very pretty; fie for shame, sir!—no engagement—155 miles to London, and not five shillings left!—here, sir,—there are three guineas more; if you can never pay me, you are welcome to it; but if you ever have it in your power and don't do it, you will be an ungrateful fellow, sir."

Before the close of our Shrewsbury season, Mr Jackson, then manager of the Theatres-Royal, Edinburgh and Glasgow, came there and engaged Mrs Bulkley, two more, and myself. I was to have two pounds a-week in Glasgow and three in Edinburgh. As soon as our finish, I accordingly set off. I had to take a chaise for myself and wife till we got to Carlisle; till when, the greatest day's journey we had made was 27 miles. From Kendal to Shap, and in many other places, on account of



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a wonderfully deep fall of snow, the roads were impassable, we were compelled to go many miles out of our way, were at Carlisle almost a week before we could get out of it. At length, after a tedious, disagreeable, dangerous, and expensive journey, the diligence brought us safe into Glasgow.

I opened there in *Bobby Pendragon*, in "Which is the Man," a new comedy then, with Mrs Jackson in *Miss Pendragon*, a part which she excelled in. As the company had then been playing some time, I was there only a month, and in the middle of January came to Edinburgh.

Here my first character was *Sir Peter Teazle;* I then played *Touchstone, Tony Lumpkin, Trinculo* in Dryden's "Tempest," and many others equally good, with a most favourable reception; but when I had to play *Skirmish* in the "Deserter," I was told by a friend that, let me perform it ever so well, I should be sure to be hissed in it, and accordingly at night, before I had uttered ten lines, I experienced that unpleasant reception. I understood this proceeded from no disrespect to me, but in compliment to Mr Mills, who had performed it there with uncommon success, and to whom in this, and all his Scotch characters, they were extravagantly partial. I could have wished they had adopted some other mode of paying tribute to him, but as I knew their pre-determination, and that I could not possibly have merited their censure, I consoled myself in the best manner, and sensible that my greatest exertions to please, would in this case be of no avail, I did not use any, but walked on and off as coolly and quietly as I possibly could.

The comedy of the "Way to keep Him," was in great repute, and we accordingly played it to genteel and crowded houses five or six nights. Mr Woods

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was highly respectable and easy in *Lovemore*, though where he puts on the Lord, 'tis true he did not possess the fire and spirit of a Garrick. Mr Lamash, being perfect master of French, a good dancer, a good fencer, and a handsome figure, had every requisite for *Sir Brilliant Fashion*. Mr Yates, the original, and afterwards Mr King, in *Sir Bashful Constant*, I might, without imitation, as I had often seen them, probably been much beholden to, for the great credit I obtained in that character. Mrs Woods, a showy figure and graceful deportment, was all that could be desired in *Lady Constant*. Mrs Sparks, in *Muslin*, had all the liveliness and spirit of a Clive, without a tincture of vulgarity. The die-a-way *Mrs Lovemore* found a proper representative in the plaintive, beautiful Mrs Baddeley; although in the last act, where she assumes gaiety, she sometimes here fell short of that liveliness and spirit, which I have seen her display in London. After what I have already said of Mrs Bulkley, it may well be believed that she was perfectly easy and happy in the gay *Widow Bellmour*, and every thing that actor or severest critic could wish for. An elegant comedy being thus ably supported, no wonder that it became a favourite, and patronized by numerous and fashionable audiences.

Mrs Bulkley, notwithstanding her great merit as an actress, was a considerable loser by the night intended for her benefit; I am hurt to say that it might, perhaps, be attributed to her private character falling short of her public estimation. She had, however, a second night, on which occasion she played *Hamlet*, as I've observed, capitally, and the novelty of the attempt made her a compensation; on that evening she had Colman's farce of the "Deuce is in Him," which was highly applauded; it was afterwards played, by desire, four nights, though at the close of the

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season. The reception I met with in *Dr Prattle*, exceeded my warmest expectations; Mrs Jackson, unused to pay compliments to a performer, regretted that I had not appeared in it sooner, for that part alone would have stamped me a favourite. About the middle of this season, I had an unfortunate misunderstanding with the manager respecting the part of *Lord Ogleby*; I had played it twice in Glasgow, during the short time I was there, and conceived that belonging to the same company, I had a right to retain it in Edinburgh; but, to my surprise, I saw Mr Ward announced for it. On my expostulating, I was told that he had always performed it in Edinburgh, that the public would still expect to see him in it; that as I had never played it there, I could not think I had a proper claim to it, and it could be no derogation. As I did not feel myself satisfied with this, I afterwards declined playing some characters that were allotted me; in consequence of which, I was, for a few weeks, partly laid upon the shelf, untill, as I have mentioned, the characters of *Sir Bashful Constant* and *Dr Prattle*, (the last part I played), restored me again to the public notice and favour. Observing with astonishment and regret that most of the company got little by their benefits, except Mr Woods, I was, for the first time in my life, afraid to venture on one; I had therefore no hesitation in complying with my old acquaintance Mrs Wilmot Wells and Mrs Baddeley's request to dance for them at their benefits, what I called, my "Medley Hornpipe." On the second night, Mr Aldridge was in the pit; he was then a teacher of dancing in Edinburgh, he was a principal dancer in Drury-Lane Theatre when I was a child, and as such, many years in Covent-Garden, and was then universally esteemed and allowed to be the first English dancer. As I was



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kind of pupil of his, particularly during two summers at Bristol, and being very fond of his "Hornpipe and Reel," from that, probably, I caught the idea of my "Medley Hornpipe," which had seven different tunes in it. I observed that once in Plymouth I was jealous of myself as a dancer, so now, the credit and applause I received in dancing was superior, I thought, to what I merited as an actor, especially when such a dancer as Mr Aldridge exclaimed in the pit, with his usual freedom and gaiety—"I had done better and more than he could ever do in his life!" That this may not seem like vanity on my part, I will say that even then I thought myself as much below Mr Aldridge as a dancer, as I was inferior to Mr Garrick as an actor. The only way that I could reconcile his sincerity and compliment to myself was, by knowing that notwithstanding his strength, he never could, (perhaps from shortness of breath,) dance above one minute at a time, and my "Medley Hornpipe" was nearly twelve. As I had danced, gratis, twice for my friends, so I did the third and last time for the benefit of the door-keepers, although they offered me two guineas. This good-nature of mine, (if I may so call it) was the occasion of my not continuing then longer in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh; Mr Jackson offered me two pounds a-week, for the next season, instead of three. Frequently I had in some theatres my income raised, but never lowered before. He told me that he was perfectly satisfied with the agreement he made me, and of my utility and abilities, but that they always gave more salary to a performer whom they brought from England the first season, than they did afterwards; for the truth of which he said I might refer to Mr Wells, Mr Lamash, or Mr Bland; observing that two pounds the

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next year would be more than three pounds the first, on account of the journey. Indeed in this he was right, and upon enquiry, I found his assertion right; but he wished me also to dance occasionally, which perhaps might have been three times a-week; to engage for this, and at the same time, for one pound a-week less than my original agreement, I thought such a hardship and derogation, that I could not possibly reconcile it to my feelings, and here we parted.

As the heavy expenses of my journey, having cost me nearly twenty-eight pounds, and my not taking any benefit in Edinburgh, had in fact left me incapable of undertaking a very long journey to England, or elsewhere, I accepted of an offer made me, to enlist in a Mr Ward's company, playing then at Perth. I must remark that Mr Ward before-mentioned, of Edinburgh, was a different person; he was in truth an actor; his *Charles* in the "School for Scandal," his *Marplot*, *Sir Charles Rackett* and others, very few indeed could equal; and his knowledge and conduct as manager of the Theatre-Royal, Manchester, the town bore testimony of. The Mr Ward of Perth was another character; he was, in his disposition, free, good-natured, open, generous, but he was a bad actor, and a worse manager; "Fit head, for such a body!"—"For such a tatter'd host of scarecrows," excepting two, were scarcely seen. Having recently come from the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh, and being known to some in Perth, I soon felt the degradation; without valuing myself highly, I might well have exclaimed with *Falstaff*,

"If I be not ashamed of my company, I am a soused gurnet!"

This manager being very fond of playing *Bajazet*,

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*Richard*, and the tyrannical parts, for which his figure only was in his favour, I was obliged to perform *George Barnwell*, it being desired, and on my account. I never suffered more than I did on that night's performance. My worthy master, the representative of Thoroughgood, was in fact, thorough bad. When Parsons played *Davy* in "Bon Ton," in his drunken scene Garrick was so highly pleased with him, that he said,

"The very buckles in his shoes were drunk."

I could not say so of this performer, in this sober part, for he had neither buckles nor strings; he was dirty from "top to toe," from "head to foot," did not know a word, and was intolerably drunk. The other characters, excepting my friend Trueman, were nearly on an equality with him; quarrelling and fighting behind the scenes at night, and even on the stage sometimes, was nothing new to the good-natured audience. After this, however, the manager desired me to play *Hamlet*, but I would not run the gauntlet again; in consequence of which some words arising, I was glad of an opportunity to quit a company, wherein I could get nothing but

"My shame, and the odd hits."

I was now again my own master, but knew not what course to steer; I found myself reduced to the plan of giving out my recitations; the grammar school there was offered to me gratis. The first night I received L.10, 11s.; as the players attempted to perform only on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, of course, I had given out my humble exhibition on their non-play night. But on my second night, Tuesday, they played against me; mustered all their strength; Mrs Ward played *Ham-*

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*let*, danced a hornpipe, and the whole company sang comic songs, and every thing they could exert to oppose me; but on that evening, they had not two pounds, when my account was L.11, 10s. As there were some boys, perhaps hired, to throw stones up, and endanger the windows of the grammar school on the first night, General Wemyss condescended to send me down three soldiers to the doors after the first evening. In short, I performed, by myself, five nights, in less than three weeks, and the amount of which was nearly fifty pounds. After all the players had done, all that their envy, malice and slander could do without effect, they solicited me to return; but Caius scorned the proposal. In the meanwhile I had received a letter of invitation to join Messrs Sutherland and Briarly, formerly of Edinburgh Theatre, and were then managers at Banff; 'twas a sharing company, 'tis, true;—" 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity it is, 'tis true;"—but they offered me one guinea a-week, five shillings every night for dancing, and a share for my wife. I had three school-masters under my tuition in Perth, better Latinists than I was; two dancing-masters under me, more acquainted though with reels and customs of the country than I was. My wife and I were lodged and boarded very comfortably for fourteen shillings a-week, and I was on the point of making Perth my residence; but thinking there was more certainty in Sutherland's offer, I accepted it, and accordingly went off to Banff.

In this company, the two managers and myself, luckily, were in different lines; Mr Sutherland, in *Old Norval*, *Evander*, and such characters, though short in stature, could seldom be surpassed; as he had neither figure nor voice in his favour, but his judgment great, I might say of him, as Churchill, in

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in his "Rosciad," said of that worthy gentleman and great actor, Mr Thomas Sheridan,

> "Where he falls short, 'tis Nature's fault alone;
> Where he succeeds, the merit's all his own."

Mr Briarly, his partner, was capital in *Falstaff*, *Othello*, *Pierre*, *Zanga*, *Richard*, and *Shylock*; to accommodate both, I had to play *Douglas*, *Prince of Wales*, *Iago*, *Jaffier*, *Alonzo*, *Richmond*, *Gratiano*, &c.; not one of these parts I ever *wished* to play, however favourably I may have been received in them. The *first* part I played in Banff was the *last* part that Garrick played—*Don Felix*; I rather would have played *Lissardo*; but Briarly was capital in *Gibby*, and Sutherland did not perform *Felix*. Managers could with ease find a *Lissardo*, a *Scrub*, a *Davy*, a *Tony Lumpkin*, a *Polonius*, a *Roderigo*, when they could not procure a decent substitute for *Felix*, *Archer*, *Young Marlow*, *Lord Minikin*, *Hamlet*, &c. My utility and versatility was therefore frequently of dis-service to me, and by obliging managers, only procured me with some of my brethren, the name of "*At-All*."

I was often in Banff desired to dance when it was not announced in the bills; on which occasions I had sent to me, in the most polite manner, twenty or thirty shillings, and the managers in that case, always insisted on my accepting my stipend of five shillings. I waited on the late Earl of Fife, having been known to him when under Garrick, to solicit the honour of his name and patronage for my benefit. He condescended to tell me that I might have it, but added, that he thought I should succeed better without it; "For," said his lordship to me, "I am sorry to say, that small as our town is, we are somewhat divided;—if you are patronized by one



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party, the other won't come;—let it alone, and you'll have us all." I took his lordship's condescending advice, and, as he said, I had the house full—I had them all.

There can be no sinister view, no flattery in speaking well of the lamented dead; therefore, while I gratefully remember the kindness and generosity of the Earl of Fife, the Duff and Abercrombie families, let me not forget *that* of the late Countess of Findlater; my landlord was a servant of hers, and understanding that my wife was poorly, often sent her refreshments, and two pounds by my landlord, after paying him ten weeks lodging.

From Banff we went to Montrose, then came back to Aberdeen; then to Montrose again, and then returned to Aberdeen; in both places, and both times, we had wonderful success! As all the company had single benefits, I had two in each town, and both great ones; my situation and utility procuring *me* a good one, and my *wife's* principally owing to her family being there remembered. From hence we went to Elgin, where the Earl, Duchess of Gordon, and others sent me presents at my benefit, who could not honour me with their presence. From Elgin we returned to our head quarters at Aberdeen; but now the face of things wore a different aspect; not in respect to the town, but our company, several of the old stock gone, and new ones in their room. As managers, like others, are sometimes too fond of new faces, I soon began to think myself slighted and looked coolly on. Having therefore wrote to my old manager Fox, for my old favourite town of Brighton, and secured, what indeed I was always sure of, an engagement with him; it being then the latter end of May, I took shipping and arrived safe in London. Mr Thornton, after our Portsmouth disaster, had commenced manager,

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and had met with the success which his knowledge and diligence well deserved. After many difficulties and a great struggle, he was the first, at least for a number of years, that was permitted to bring a company into the town of Reading, in Berkshire, where he was then playing. As it was full six weeks before the Brighton Theatre opened, I was glad in the interim to join him.

The first part I played was *Sparkish* to Mrs Jordan's *Country-Girl*. I performed two very opposite characters for her first benefit, *Shylock* to her *Portia*, and *Watty Cockney* to her celebrated *Romp*; for her second night, *Beau Clincher* to her *Sir Harry Wildair*, and *Watty Cockney* again. Mrs Jordan's stay was not above a fortnight; the *Romp* in that space was played six nights. The theatre on these occasions was too small, not holding above forty pounds comfortably; this, as was expected, turned out a great season, but yet not a very profitable one to the manager; he threw away powder and shot unnecessarily by bringing down so many *stars!* The town and vicinity were mad for a theatre, and had he confined himself only to a decent company, they would have been perfectly satisfied, and he some hundreds the gainer; but if a man will mount his hobby, let him pay for it. My time being now expired, I was obliged to quit, and went down to Brighton.

Mr Fox had indeed told me, that he had engaged Mr Ryder, a capital actor, and many years manager of the Theatre-Royal, Dublin. I was prepared, therefore, for his performing some of *my* favourite characters, such as *Scrub*, *Lissardo*, *Marplot*, *Skirmish*, and the *Mock Doctor*; as I was not desired to play any *inferior* character in those pieces, I did not feel myself degraded at resigning them to an

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actor of such eminence. I played *Sir Francis Gripe* to his *Marplot*, *Old Mirable* to his *Duretete*, *Simkin* to his *Skirmish*, *Fribble* to his *Flash*, and had no cause of complaint for want of business; but Mr Ryder was the most unfair and jealous actor of all I ever knew. He could not bear any one to be noticed or meet with applause but himself; he was a very unpleasant man in a theatre—consequential, rude, and troublesome; particularly at rehearsals, having to wait for him an hour, perhaps, after the appointed time; in the course of which, Mrs Ryder would send for him half-a-dozen times, and he durst not but go. We have been, therefore, till four o'clock in the afternoon rehearsing the short play of the "Busy Body;" and he thought it, I suppose, beneath him to make any excuse or apology for these delays.

As the season advanced, Mr Ryder's behaviour was intolerable. I was this time glad when we finished, and Mr Thornton having left Reading, I went to him then at Gosport. Here we had full houses and plenty of noise, even exceeding Portsmouth. I was not sorry when we got to Horsham. A misunderstanding happened here between the manager and the clerk of the peace, who insisted on it that he should play no longer than the time specified in the licence, and on his coming into town a great part of it had elapsed. Mr Thornton contended that he had a right to play sixty nights, according to the licence, commence when he would. As the breach between them could not now be repaired, on the expiration of the time, Mr Ellis, the clerk, sent notice we must discontinue; but the manager, thinking he would not interfere with the performers, immediately commenced benefits, beginning with Mrs and Miss Cornelys. Mr Palmer,

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from London, came down that night and played *Ranger* and the *Lyar*; he had also agreed to come and play gratis for *our* benefits, on condition of a clear and free night for *his*. Now the manager proposed the next night to the company; but they, thinking themselves secure now, and under no apprehension of being stopped, from various motives, declined accepting it. I had great reason to be alarmed, as a gentleman in the confidence of Mr Ellis had told me he would assuredly stop us, and advised me to have my benefit immediately, if possible; I was glad, therefore, to catch at the night. Mrs Cornelys and daughter, alledging that they were apprehensive of the consequences, and perhaps a little piqued at having a bad benefit the night before, refused to play. We had, therefore, to send off in the afternoon of the play-day to Dorking, thirteen miles, for a *Portia* and *Nerissa*, who did not arrive till 7 o'clock, and Mr Palmer, who had to play *Shylock* and *Petruchio*, had not come from London half an hour before, so that indeed I began to think, as all the town did, that there would be no play at all. However, there was one, and, considering the various reports and disadvantages I laboured under, a pretty good house. Before we finished, an official peremptory notice came to stop us; we were obliged to give it up, and I congratulated myself on my escape. But 'where should Othello go?"—where was I to escape to?—I was again thrown out of employment at a minute's notice. Thornton had, as I said, a company at Dorking and another at Guildford, yet he would not give me a situation in either!—Unwilling to go to London, I stopt short with a party at Windsor, where, in a little time, he sent an invitation to me to join him at Reading, and, having



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been so favourably received there, I readily accepted it.

If I was in a little estimation there before, by being the original *Watty Cockney*, my being now the first *Jemmy Jumps*, in the "Farmer," which was played sixteen nights that season, confirmed me; as the manager had used them the first time to *stars*, he found himself, I suppose, under a necessity of producing them now; they had now seen so many, that they had lost their influence, insomuch that the great Mr Ryder, after playing there a fortnight, his most celebrated characters, had not thirteen pounds to his benefit. There was great talk about *mine*, every one saying they would go to "Jemmy Jumps's" benefit, as they called me. Returning from a gentleman's house about a mile from the town who had sent for some tickets, but expressly desired to see me, I met a person in the afternoon who told me to my astonishment my house was full! "Why," said I, "the doors are not to be opened till 6 o'clock, and now it's not much past four!" On his re-assuring me of the fact, I made all possible haste, and found his assertion true; the crowd was so great and pressing that they threatened to break the doors if they were not opened—they rushed in like a torrent—no one there so soon as to take money—what could I do? no getting them *out:* I was forced to rely upon their own justice and generosity, and from my putting an advertisement in the paper, many had the honour to step forward; but on a moderate estimate, I suppose the house at last was twelve pounds deficient.

After Reading, we went to Henley upon Thames, between which places the late Lord Barrymore had a seat, and an elegant theatre for his amusement, where the nobility and gentry for many miles round

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had plays performed in a proper style; where the piece of "Don Juan" surpassed all I could conceive, and where the greatest hospitality presided. He borrowed some of our company to assist on these occasions, and we were well entertained and liberally rewarded.

The next summer I went again to Brighton, to a new theatre and new manager, Mr Fox's licence having expired. If the merit of this company was not equal to former ones, they were at least more shewy and dressy; two or three of the ladies played for nothing, and one or two even paid the manager *for* playing! When we finished, I was again favoured with the Assembly Room at the Castle Inn, under the patronage of the late Right Hon. Lady Viscountess Montague, to whose notice I was recommended by the authoress Mrs Charlotte Smith, and who wrote for me a New Occasional Address; as I never gave a copy of it but once, and don't think it ever appeared in print, I hope it will not be unacceptable.

"When, in a thousand swarms, the summer o'er,
The birds of passage quit our English shore,
By various routs the feather'd myriad moves;
The Becca-fica seeks Italian groves,
No more a wheat-ear; while the soaring files
Of sea-fowl gather round the Hebrid isles:—
But, if by bird-lime touch'd, unplumed, confined,
Some poor ill-fated stragg'ler stays behind,
Driv'n from his transient perch, beneath your eaves,
On his unsheltered head, the tempest raves!
While drooping round, redoubling ev'ry pain,
His mate and nestlings ask his help in vain!
So we, the buskin and the sock who wear,
And strut and fret our little season here,
Dismissed at length, as Fortune bids, divide;
Some,—lucky rogues—sit down on Thames's side;—
Others, to Liffy's western banks proceed,
And some, driv'n far a-field across the Tweed.

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" But, pinion'd here, alas! I cannot fly,
The hapless, unplumed, ling'ring straggler, I;
Unless the gen'rous pity you bestow,
Shall imp my shatter'd wings and let me go.
" Hard is his fate, whom evil stars have led
To seek in scenic act precarious bread;
While still, through wild vicissitudes afloat,
An hero now—and now—a Sans Culottes!
That clymosynary bread he gains,
Mingling with real distresses, mimic pains.
See, in our groupe, a pale, lank Falstaff stare,
Much needs he stuffing:—While young Ammon there
Rehearses, in a garret, ten feet square!
And while his soft Statira sighs consent,
Roxana comes not—but a dun for rent!
Here, shiv'ring Edgar, in his blanket roll'd,
Exclaims, with too much reason—' Tom's a cold!'
And vainly tries his sorrows to divert,
While Goneril or Regan—wash his shirt!
Lo! fresh from Calais, Edward, mighty king,
Revolves—a mutton-chop upon a string;
And Hotspur—' plucking honour from the moon,'
Feeds a sick infant—with a wooden spoon!
More bless'd the peasant, who, with nervous toil,
Hews the rough oak, or breaks the stubborn soil;
Weary indeed, he sees the ev'ning come,
But then the rude, yet tranquil hut, his home,
Receives it's rustic inmate;—then are his
Secure repose, and dear domestic bliss;
The orchard's blushing fruit—the garden's store,
The pendant hop that mantles round the door,
Are his: and while the cheerful faggots burn,
His lisping children—' hail their Sire's return!'
More blest the fisher, who, undaunted, braves
In his small bark, th' impetuous winds and waves;
For though he plough the sea, while others sleep,
He draws, like Glendower—' spirits from the deep!'
And, while the storm howls round, amidst his trouble,
Bright ' moonshine'* still illuminates the cobble;
Pale with her fears for him, some fair poissarde
Watches his nearing boat;—with fond regard

* Or Geneva.

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Smiles when she sees his little canvass handing,
And clasps her dripping lover on his landing.
But wand'ring play'rs,—' Unhousel'd, unanniel'd,
And unappointed,'—scour life's common field,
A flying squadron ;—disappointments cross 'em,
And the campaign concludes perhaps—at Horsham.*
Oh, ye ! whose timely bounty deigns to shed
Compassion's balm upon our luckless head,
Benevolence, with warm and glowing breast,
And soft, celestial Mercy,—' Doubly blest ;'
Smile on the gen'rous act ;—where means are given,
To aid th' unfortunate, will merit Heaven."

While still at Brighton, I saw a person one evening, whom, by the bye, I had given a ticket to for the performance, and who had heard me deliver this address ; he could not find fault with it, for indeed it was above his capacity ; he was, in fact, a kind of " Wou'd-be," a half and half actor ; as Shakespeare says, " His pride was great, his merit small ;" yet, without the least pretensions, he said that it was letting down, to use his own words, " the *consequence and dignity of an actor !*" I replied that Roscius of Rome was almost the only man that ever did or could keep up the dignity of an actor, but that next to him, our English Roscius (not the *young* Roscius) " Garrick," had the credit of the stage and actors as much at heart, and wished them to be held as high in the public estimation, as ever man could possibly do. I readily admitted that there were several humiliating lines in it, rather painful indeed for me to speak, and such as, then, my circumstances and situation did not, in fact, require ; but to have altered one passage, must almost have destroyed the whole ; it was done with the best intent, and had I only hinted what I felt, the bare suggestion might probably have lost

* Horsham Prison.

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me the friendship of the worthy authoress, and the patronage of the Lady Montague.

Many actors even in *my* time, and many too of eminence, have in an obscure corner (like poor Otway) pined away for want. Garrick never experienced or suffered the uncertainty, the precarious situation of an actor's life, more especially such (though few) brought up, like myself, from infancy to the stage, and cruelly debarred from any trade, or any other profession. I said *few*, I don't know *one*, nor in serious truth, ever *heard* of one,—one of my age, in such circumstances as I have been reduced to. Yet Garrick foresaw, and kindly felt what old and infirm actors were exposed to, to prevent which he established the Theatrical Fund, for the benefit and support of decayed actors; he paid all the expenses attending the institution of it, and liberally contributed thereto: A prologue on the occasion he did not think it below himself to write and speak. As in it he humorously, yet feelingly, describes what they might be reduced to, I repeated part of it to this pragmatical fool that I was with, in justification of my fore-mentioned address. He had never heard it. It has, I know, been printed, but as some of my kind readers may not have seen it, I'll beg leave to insert it, in order, not only to amuse them, but that they may judge, if after Garrick's prologue, *my* address could wound the feelings of any *actor*, who was properly entitled to the name.

GARRICK'S *Prologue for the benefit of the Theatrical Fund, in support of decayed Actors, who from Age and Infirmity were obliged to retire from the Stage.*

"A vet'ran see, whose last act on the stage
Entreats your smiles for sickness and for age;
Their cause I plead;—plead it in heart and mind;
A fellow-feeling makes one wond'rous kind.

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Might we but hope your zeal would not be less
When I am gone, to patronize distress,
That hope obtain'd, the wish'd-for end secures,
To sooth *their* cares, who oft have lighten'd *yours*.
Shall the great heroes of celestial line,
Who drank full bowls of Greek and Roman wine,
Cæsar and Brutus, Agamemnon, Hector,
Nay, Jove himself, who here has quaff'd his nectar,
Shall they, who govern'd fortune, cringe and court her,
Thirst in their age, and call in vain for porter?
Like Belisarius, tax the pitying street,
With "Date obolum," to all they meet?
Shan't I, who oft have drench'd my hands in gore,
Stabb'd many, poison'd some, beheaded more;
Who numbers slew in battle, on this plain,
Shan't I, the slayer, try to feed the slain?
Brother to all, with equal love I view
The men who slew me, and the men I slew;
I must, I will, this happy project seize,
That those, too old to die, may live with ease.
{ Suppose the babes I smother'd in the Tower, }
{ By chance, or sickness, lose their acting power, }
{ Shall they, once Princes, worse than all be served, }
When young be murder'd, and when murder'd, starved?
Matrons, half ravished, for your recreation,
In age, should never want *some* consolation!
Can I, young Hamlet once—to nature lost,
Behold, Oh, horrible!—my father's ghost,
With grizly beard, pale cheek, stalk up and down,
And he, the royal Dane, want half-a-crown?
Forbid it, ladies; gentlemen, forbid it!
Give joy to age, and let 'em say,—you did it.
To you, ye gods! * I make my last appeal;
You have a right to judge, as well as feel;
Will your high wisdom to our scheme incline,
That kings, queens, heroes, gods, and ghosts may dine?
Olympus shakes!—*that* omen all secures:
May ev'ry joy you give, be tenfold yours!

More than once I have heard Garrick speak this with a sympathetic smile, but now, "I have that within which passeth shew;" now, I deeply feel it, particu-

* The Galleries.

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larly the lines I have marked, respecting the babes. After having, in childhood, played the young *Duke of York* and *Prince Edward* to Garrick's and Sheridan's *King Richard*, having now nearly lost my faculties, and having, as I have stated, unfortunately lost my claim to the fund, after having frequently been murdered by both, I may very probably be starved; but

> "Forbid it, ladies; gentlemen, forbid it!
> Give joy to age, and let me say, you did it."

Before the Brighton season closed, I unexpectedly received an offer of a new kind of engagement; new to me, because where I was to be heard only, and not seen. A Mr Clagget had for some time been proprietor of the Apollo-Gardens, near Westminster-bridge; music, tea, and other refreshments, had caused it to be numerously attended; he had now designed to enlarge his plan, by a kind of fantoccini: He had fixed upon the musical piece of the "Padlock," and as he offered me good terms, and I wished to be in London, I accepted them and went. He had prepared a pretty stage in miniature, his scenes and all corresponding with his two-feet figures which were well made and properly dressed, with experienced persons to work them, and "suit the action to the word." I had to speak for my little representative, Mungo; after the first we had no rehearsals: I had no study, was not wanted till eight o'clock, no trouble in dressing, was out of sight, and between the acts could go into the room and take my tea, unnoticed and unknown, as an indifferent spectator. We had good singers for Don Diego, and Leander, a pupil of his, a capital *Leonora*, and her figure so well suited to the part, 'twas pity she was not seen as well as heard; with a well-selected and good band of



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music, this attracted numbers of additional customers, and well satisfied the proprietor, I don't doubt for his additional expences. The gardens were large, delightfully pleasant, accommodating, well laid out and diversified; they were open all day, and were a charming promenade: If the weather was unfavourable, and the garden seats and boxes pretty full, which has often been the case, there was an elegant room to receive them; and in both, of an evening, there has frequently been more than a thousand people; it was resorted to like a little Ranelagh or Vauxhall. The "Padlock" was thus represented every evening above seventy times, till at last, I got heartily tired of my friend Mungo, and was not very sorry when the season was over.

My state was now changed for variety of business, study and fatigue, by playing and dancing almost every night, before a turbulent audience, and losing the pleasure and tranquillity of the Apollo Garden, for the noise of a bear-garden, or a theatre at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, where, as in Portsmouth and Gosport, they were attentive only to song, dance and pantomime. The place of itself is a delightful spot, especially at or about Newport, the centre of the isle, lying high, and commanding a beautiful prospect of the sea, the towns and country; but it is so crowded with foreigners, soldiers and sailors; the inns and shops so crammed, and such a jargon of tongues at Cowes, lying low, close to the sea, and very dirty, as render it very uncomfortable to a stranger, and dangerous at night to walk the streets. One Sunday evening, a serjeant standing opposite my lodging, a drunken soldier came down the town, flourishing his bayonet; without a word, he thrust it at the poor serjeant, and unfortunately killed him on the spot. He was immediately secured, and tried,



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but did not come off so well as the midshipman at Portsmouth, who murdered our carpenter; this poor creature had no friends to swear through thick and thin for him, no money for bribery; he suffered death, and with great resignation, but declaring from first to last, that he remembered nothing of it, and that they might as well have accused him of killing twenty as one. Although the law (as it is not fitting,) makes no allowance or extenuation of a crime committed in a state of inebriety, yet surely this poor wretch was less criminal than the other, and had some little claim to pity.

As Mr Thornton now was manager of no less than sixteen theatres, I went with him from here, Cowes in Hampshire, to Arundel in Sussex, to Reading in Berkshire, to Guildford in Surrey, and Chelmsford in Essex. In these five different counties, in five weeks, at the races or assizes, I played every night, and had to travel on the Sunday; this may be called playing, 'tis true, but I found it working, and hard work too. At the last place, from the hurry and fatigue, I was very unwell; his bustling time being then pretty well over, and I could easily be spared, and the summer being far advanced, I took his advice, and left Chelmsford to go down again to my favourite Brighton, where I thought the sea and air might be of service to me, and where I hoped that at the latter end of the theatrical season, in September, when the London houses opened, and there was always a change in the company, I might have an engagement with Mr Palmer, who was then manager there. Mrs Wells, celebrated for her *Becky Cadwallader* and *Cowslip*, and her imitations, was there likewise at this time disengaged, perhaps for the benefit of her health, and having an eye too, like myself, upon the theatre; in the meanwhile, she had

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engaged the Castle-Inn Assembly room, for her imitations; she employed me in order to relieve and assist her with mine: In particular, I had to play a scene of *Jaffier* to her *Belvidera*, in imitation of a celebrated performer, whom I had never heard, so that I was obliged to make the best I could of it from her instructions. Mrs Wells paid ten pounds for the room, and I suppose, it cost her ten more for tea, which, with music, bills and tickets and incidentals, occasioned her expences to come pretty heavy; but she had an elegant and very numerous company, at five shillings each; and as, on some account, her performance was postponed a fortnight from the evening at first intended, and many persons were then out of town who had paid for tickets; considering this, and the many presents she had no doubt received, she certainly benefited very handsomely by the night, and knowing my circumstances, the time, trouble and anxiety it cost me, might have rewarded me with a trifle more than a guinea; very likely, Mrs Wells thought so too, and to make up for which, offered to give her imitations for *me*; with this I was perfectly well satisfied, and with reason. Mr Tilt, of the Castle-Inn, kindly told me, I should have the room, paying only for the lights; advised me not to think of giving tea, as Mrs Wells did: The musicians of the Steine band would have played for me, as formerly, on the most easy terms; my expences would have been but little, my bills delivered, many tickets bespoke, and I had every reason to suppose, that I might, at the very least, have cleared above twenty pounds by it; this prospect in an instant vanished. The night before my performance, Mrs Well's sent for me, and informed me that she could not assist me, as she intended; that Mr Palmer had made her an offer of an engagement and a

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benefit, which she must have accepted immediately, or declined at once; therefore, she had agreed to play next evening, my night, (for I was obliged to attempt a matter of the kind, against my will, on their play nights, as I could not have the rooms on any other, they being engaged for the balls). I could not but express my surprise and dissatisfaction at this intelligence, when, as a salvo, she added, that if I gave up my attempt, the theatre was open to me for the remainder of the season, with my benefit: Still I was not reconciled to the business, and knew not how to act; it was in vain to contend, I gave up my night reluctantly, and accepted the proposal made me. It was a very late season, and it being November before I could have my benefit, and the charges thereof raised to L.25, I cleared but little by it. Mr Palmer played frequently in the summer, but in September, when Drury-Lane Theatre opened, he went through too much. On a Monday night, there he has played *Joseph Surface* and the *Lyar*; Tuesday, at Brighton, *Ranger* and *Petruchio*; Wednesday, in London, *Dionysius*; Thursday, *Bajazet*; Friday, at Brighton, *King Richard* and *Young Philpot*, and on Saturday, in London, *Pierre* and *Captain Flash*. I have known him to have performed these variety of fatiguing characters for three or four weeks, in London and Brighton every night, a distance of sixty miles; the great exertions of his required talents on these occasions, and the journeys, may well be considered a laborious task. No performer, I have known, made use of his abilities, health and strength, with so little advantage to himself; his father had a large family, and he, being eldest, was a father to them; he became so, in a few years, to his own lovely offspring, the pictures of their parents. As he had felt the want and necessity of a good education,

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his female branches were attended to, with all requisite accomplishments; the boys, of course, in theirs. When, to enable him to do this, he speculated, he was unfortunate; his becoming for a time joint manager with Mr Yates at Birmingham, turned out so. The Theatre, Well-close square, London, by which he thought to have realized a little fortune, proved a most severe and serious loss to him. As he could but ill be spared out of a play in London, he unavoidably disappointed the public at Brighton more than once or twice; once, when, by Mr Colman's permission, he was to have performed his comedy of the "Suicide;" instead of which, to a polite and numerous audience, his acting-manager, without the least apology, begun and performed the "Stratagem." Another time, two comedians of eminence in Drury, were announced to perform with him in Brighton, when, from the play there being suddenly changed, they could not possibly attend—a crowded house on both nights, the boxes full of fashionables, they were disappointed, displeased, offended—his name lost its otherwise due attraction—his stars lost their influence—for after, none believed that they would shine till they saw them in their proper hemisphere. In consequence of these disasters, after two years management, he gave it up, like other schemes, much worse than that at his commencement. The loss of an amiable wife and son, and other domestic troubles preying on his mind, it is needless to add that he died suddenly on the stage of the Theatre-Royal, Liverpool, in the character of the *Stranger*, after uttering these remarkable words:

"There is another and a *better* world!"

I staid in Brighton till the latter end of December, having it long in contemplation to try a benefit in the Theatre-Royal, Haymarket, London.



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Lady Montague kindly gave me a recommendatory letter to Lord Dartmouth, then Lord Chamberlain, which easily procured me a licence. Mrs Gardner, the original Mrs Cadwallader, with Mr Foote, and many years of his theatre, and formerly in great repute in Covent-Garden Theatre, offered to become my partner. As there was twenty pounds to pay for the use of the theatre, before we had liberty to print a bill, the licence, advertisements, and other matters requiring immediate payment, as she had a friend who could supply money for these things, I readily closed with her, furnishing on my own account, in the mean time, large and small bills, tickets, engaging performers, writing parts out, &c. The play we fixed on was the "Clandestine Marriage;" I being partial to the part of *Lord Ogleby*, and Mrs Gardner to that of *Mrs Heidelberg*. Mr Thornton, however, being then in town, she wished me to resign the part to him, as he had engaged, not only to play gratis, but to furnish dresses for our performance, which was a saving to us of about three guineas. As she and her friend were both glad to catch at any thing that might save a shilling, and as they thought, perhaps, that from his publicity, his "name was a tower of strength," I was prevailed on to give it up and play *Canton*. I spoke Foote's prologue to The Author, and should have performed *Cadwallader* much better any where else, but on the same boards whereon I had so often seen him, the great original; I could not, all through, put him out of my head, and felt my own inferiority. I wished the farce to have been the "Mayor of Garratt," where I had no occasion for apprehension in *Jerry Sneak*, and as she was the original *Mrs Sneak*, I thought it might suit both; but, perhaps, she imagined *that* character was not of so much consequence

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as *Becky Cadwallader*, and, simpleton as I was, again gave *this* up. One great reason, I believe, for her losing her situation in the London theatres, was her making too free a use of her pen;—writing paragraphs for the papers in praise of herself, and condemning her contemporaries. On this occasion, therefore, she indulged her propensity, and wrote a very long *prelude;* it was indeed as long as some farces. *My* part in it, originally, was above ten lengths; that is, (to those unacquainted with our play-house lingo,) ten times forty-two lines; *her* part in it much longer. As she gave full vent to her spleen in this, which was chiefly levelled against the proprietors and acting managers of the London theatres, I hinted to her that I did not think the Lord Chamberlain would license it. She, not supposing that a line of it would be expunged, and I imagining that a line of it would not be retained, were both equally disappointed, for there was only about half of it cut out and unlicensed. This circumstance gave me fresh trouble—I had to write it over again for the license—again for the prompter—to write again all the parts—to unstudy, if I may call it so, my own character—I had to remember to forget certain lines and speeches which I had studied, —and in fine, my whole time and employment was thus so taken up, that I had not, from the first, a single day to myself, to wait on ladies and gentlemen and friends with tickets, to whom I might have sold many pounds; by the advice, too, of a literary friend of her's, the play was twice postponed, another great baulk to its success. The night was not till the 23d of April; a benefit the same evening at both theatres, Sadler's Wells, Astley's, and every place of public entertainment open against us. I wanted to provide my own money-takers

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and door-keepers, but that could not be; I was obliged to have those commonly belonging to the theatre, though I engaged to pay them their usual stipend to stay at home and keep out of the way;—as I expected, I was most shamefully robbed. I had in the same house, the week before, played *Captain Lebrush* and *Frenchman* in the "Register-Office," for the benefit of a Mr Walker; he declared, that my house appeared better and fuller than his;—his amount was L.120, and mine not quite L.55. After all my fatigue and anxiety for four months, instead of gaining a few pounds, I was a considerable loser! I was glad when this scene of trouble shut, to embrace the first opportunity of getting out of it. Accordingly I immediately closed with my old bustling manager, Thornton, and went to his company, then at Windsor. A little after, he hurried me down again to Chelmsford; not a month there, before back again to Windsor. Here, the time not allowing us to take benefits, I learnt, that the year before his Majesty had condescended to command a play for the benefit of the whole company; but it coming to his knowledge that they were not satisfied with the division of the house—the manager then having thought proper to include some performers in it as sharers, who had, but did not at that time, belong to the theatre—there was little hope of that honour ever being granted again; however, they prevailed on me to write to his Majesty and solicit it. I did and succeeded. We had fifteen guineas from their Majesties, and five sent us from their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York; after which, partly under their patronage, we went to Weybridge, adjacent to their seat at Oatlands. The theatre, if it might be termed so, was not fit for their reception, but with a little portico and a kind

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of stage-box, they were pleased to be satisfied, and condescended frequently to honour us. The Duchess was partial to the musical farce of "My Grandmother," in which, I played *Dicky Gossip*. As the manager had commonly two companies and sometimes three, he had one now at Reading, where I had been twice, and where I became a favourite. Mr Thornton proposed to me to go there for a fortnight, and the prospect he held out to me of having a benefit there in about that time, and then another on my return to Weybridge, I readily consented to go. A performer from Reading came to supply my place at Weybridge, but did not happen to succeed. I was obliged to leave Reading with my name in the bills, and without a benefit, the manager having come over for me himself, and I returned with him to Weybridge, under flattering circumstances that I will forbear to mention.

At Weybridge and Reading, however, between the two, I fell to the ground. I could have no chance of a benefit at Reading, and we were compelled to go three in a benefit at Weybridge, or not take any. I had innocently said, that independent of my interest there, I could fill half the house by my Chertsey friends, a distance of only three short miles. This simple declaration caused a little envy and jealousy with some of the company, who could not bear the idea of my having a single benefit; and, small as the theatre was, clearing perhaps ten pounds, when they might not clear ten shillings. They therefore resolved to lump the benefits, and all share and share alike.

On the morning of my benefit there with two more, I came with the manager from Reading; it was seven o'clock before I got into Weybridge—just time enough to dress for *Shylock*—had no opportu-

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nity to wait at Oatlands—not a minute to call upon a friend in Weybridge, (much less Chertsey;) I went through the day and night's fatigue and anxiety, without clearing ten shillings. As I had no reason to be pleased with this juggling business of the company, I left them. With the worthy Dr Smith, of Chertsey, and his amicable and amiable family, I had some years before, as at this time, passed many agreeable hours at his very comfortable board. Now, he had recommended me to Richard Crewshaw, Esq., a gentleman of a considerable fortune, being the principal proprietor of the amazing iron-works at a place called Myrther Tidswell, in Wales, where, in rotation, he had people at work constantly for him, night and day, without ceasing; suffice it to say, I was well informed that even at that time he payed his men there nearly twelve hundred pounds per month. This gentleman had a country-seat near Weybridge, and happened then to be there; I was treated by him more like an inmate than a dependent stranger. When I was asked in the politest manner to give a recitation, one of his daughters would sing a song, and the other accompany her on the piano-forte. I had passed three very agreeable as well as profitable evenings there in this manner, when, on my having previously applied to their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York, I had the happiness to receive intimation that I might have the honour of delivering my recitations before them at Oatlands, giving me three days notice. I accordingly attended, so did the Berkshire band; when their seats, my situation, and the room was properly disposed, exactly at the appointed time, their Royal Highnesses entered with the Stadtholder. I had previously given a written paper to Colonel Bunbury, containing a list of serious and

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humorous recitations, to make their selection, being ready in all; I trembled for myself, more than ever I did in a theatre. Colonel Bunbury came to me each time to acquaint me with the order, and to my surprise, the first thing fixed on, was the account of "John Gilpin." To a numerous audience, or in a theatre, it might pass very well, but to a small select company, and before such personages, it was very hazardous. A short time before, at Windsor, at the manager's request, I had, between the play and farce, spoken Hippesly's "Drunken Man;" to those unacquainted with the piece, I beg to observe, that it consists chiefly in making blunders by reading the newspaper crossways. On that night, the Duke of York was present. A week after, when his Majesty honoured us by commanding a play, to my great surprise and vexation, I saw myself again announced in the bills for this whimsical interlude. Imagining this to be only one of the manager's freaks, I expostulated with him on the impropriety and indelicacy of delivering it, and absolutely declined it, till he positively assured me it was by desire of the Duke of York, and I could not but comply. As Hippesley was the author and first deliverer of this pretty piece, so from its nature, as it will constantly admit of alterations and additions, agreeably to the change of time and place and the whim of the actor, it has undergone all these by later actors; Shuter, Weston, Lee Lewes, &c. With others, at times I ventured to make some, but Majesty being in the house on the night alluded to, unwittingly and unthinkingly, I seemed to read the following paragraph:—"The King's most gracious speech to both Houses of Parliament: If you don't deliver your money, dam'me, I'll blow your brains out!" I had not given this a thought till after I had

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blundered out the first line, and then there was no time for thinking; I would have given my fingers to have been elsewhere, but his Majesty, with his usual good-nature, laughed immoderately at it, the whole house joined, and all was safe, all well. I was in great trepidation, as I said, fearing that after *John Gilpin*, this thing might come in requisition, but my fears were groundless, and, on consideration, I was wrong to suppose it. After Garrick had quitted the stage, he had to read his own farce of "Lethe," with alterations, before their Majesties and a few of the first nobility. Of all the various scenes he had appeared in, this was to him a new one. Accustomed as he was to the loud and general applause of a theatre, he could not be reconciled to silent approbation; he was disconcerted and could not exert his abilities. "It was," said he, "as if they had thrown a wet blanket over me." Here, for once, I had, in this case, the advantage of him; having frequently recited to very polite companies, I was well aware that I could not on this occasion expect any marked applause from the royal personages I had then the honour to be before; but from the Duke and Duchess condescending to hear me for nearly two hours, and from their liberality towards me the next day, I had every reason to be perfectly satisfied. I had also no cause to be displeased with myself on account of the Stadtholder, for my endeavours to amuse seemed so agreeable and composing to him, that I believe he was asleep all the time!

By desire of a few friends, I then went to Chertsey for a private performance, then to Windsor to give a public one. By permission of the master, I was then three times with the young gentlemen of Eton College; as it was in day-time, and no kind of expense attending it, I willingly left my remuneration to their



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own generosity,—"Many could help one," and I was well rewarded.

Not having any settled engagement, I went to Reading, being sure of encouragement there for a night or two. Here again I received a letter of invitation from Mr Thornton, to join him at Cowes; I went. The "Busy Body" was fixed on for the first night of opening; in consequence of some performers not having arrived, and we being but four, could not do the play, and at seven o'clock, the house, tolerably full, was about to be dismissed. This would not only have been a serious loss at present to the manager, but a damp to the future business, and a disappointment to the public. To prevent this, I offered to play father and son, *Sir Francis Gripe* and *Charles*; as they were, or should be, twice *on* both together, I was in this point unavoidably deficient; save that, I was told that the metamorphosis was not perceivable.

"I've done the state some service, and they know it."

Yes, they know it, but very few (managers I mean) have had the candour to acknowledge it, and fewer still, the generosity to reward it. Our business went on as usual, playing every night to pretty full, but noisy audiences. Having frequently to dance, after playing as an old man one evening, and finishing the play, I had to change from head to foot; as he was always in a most violent hurry, and would scarcely allow time for change of scene, he thought me tedious, and spoke very abruptly to me; therefore, when our season finished, I told him that I would not go with him to Fareham, play every night for a guinea a-week, and dance for *nothing* but the liability of being insulted. I observed he was never easy with me or without me. I said for *nothing*, for surely,



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as well as others at least, I deserved my salary as an actor. With the multiplicity of business I went through, dancing was to me a great inconvenience, much trouble, and some little additional expense, and that if I went with him, I should discontinue it, unless he would allow for it weekly or nightly. His generosity not prompting him to do this, I was not fool enough to continue on the same terms, and here we parted for the last time. "Now, Tony Lumpkin was his own man again!" As I could therefore not afford to lay idle, I immediately tried to make the best of my time. I am not fond of making retrograde movements, for, crab-like, I've been going backwards all my life; yet, I hope, my courteous reader will excuse my wishing to lead him back to what was called, the "Sadler's Wells Theatre," at Portsmouth. This had formerly been a tennis-court, and was then, as now, at the back of a capital tavern. Having performed in a farce, interlude, and danced, I had that night only *Skirmish* to play afterwards; which being drest for, and not having to go on till the 2d act, I thought a glass of grog would cheer me, and accordingly went round *our* way to the bar to take one. Captain M'Bride, Captain Windsor, and about eight more gentlemen of the navy, had just come out of the theatre in at the front door, with the same refreshing intention; they immediately saw and knew me; before I had got my glass, they "laid violent hands upon me!"—Willy, nilly, I must go! shewn into a private room, I confess I had no objection to it, but could not foresee the consequences. The first glass was very acceptable,—"Why went I thither but for that intent?"—I will not scruple to say that the second was not displeasing, and that with little persuasion, I did not even hesitate much at the third, but there I hoped the matter would have ended; but

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no such thing; there was to be "another and another after that." When I politely thanked them, and wished to make "a safe and honourable retreat," the door was fast! I could not possibly make my exit, P. S. or O. P. The first act over, I was sent for;—"No," was the word, "I was not *come-at-able!*" The manager came—they admitted him—he was told plainly that I positively should not go out of that room on any account till I drank a glass of grog with every one of them:—that I had only little drunken Skirmish to play—it could not hurt me—they'd take care of me—they came every night while on shore—if I did'nt comply, I should stay there all night, and they'd come no more!—Remonstrances were all in vain;—the theatre now was turbulent for the second act to commence, and the manager himself, at length, finding no other means of remedy, was obliged to join with my inconsiderate friends, and entreat me to comply, if possible, with their out-o'-the-way humour. I believe we both equally apprehended the danger of complying or refusing, and both saw the thing exactly in the same light, only I fancy that my eyes were somewhat brighter. I would fain, like many others, have done my task by proxy, or, at least, have caused the manager to have gone halves with me in this beverage business, which favour he would have granted; but this the court-martial would not allow. I had now no alternative; I could not say, "The last glass was welcome as the former," far from it; however, irksome as it really was, with difficulty I swallowed my allotted potions. I was then conducted by the manager into the theatre; but I was too polite now to go up the stairs in an ordinary way; mine could not be said to degenerate into common walking, running, or sliding, but some-

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thing of a manner that condescendingly partook of all. Every article, too, behind the scenes, wore a livelier and a different face to me, to what they did when I left them only half an hour before; they all appeared to be "Double, double!"—I understood that on my releasement, these gentlemen immediately resumed their stations, dispersed themselves in the boxes and pit, "every man to his gun," and with infinite glee soon spread the news of their victory and my defeat all over the house. I reflected the next day that a battle and a bottle were very different things, and that so *many* brave men would have scorned to have attacked *one* in fight! But with a glass they were not ashamed to set their strength and wit against poor me. The audience being *prepared*, gave me a loud and warm reception, and but for *that* and being so *protected*, I might justly have met with other treatment, for I was not "*Ipse* he," but "*tipsey* he," and more than so; for the first time I found great fault with the *stage*, for it was not half wide enough for me!

I should not, perhaps, have related this whimsical transaction, but that Captain M'Bride, the officer principally concerned in it, had for some time past retired, and was then Admiral M'Bride, and at his country-seat at West Cowes, just across the water from me at East Cowes. Thinking that I might be remembered by him, I waited on him and was known, and cordially received. I took over a musician two nights with me to his mansion, when my exertions seemed to please them; I was well entertained and fully satisfied.

I then engaged the Assembly-room in the pleasant town of Newport, where the ladies and gentlemen, and officers, made it well worth my while. By way of taking leave of Cowes, and being en-

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couraged, I also, for one night, engaged the theatre there, which answered very well, and would have turned out capitally, but for the printer, who, not caring for my advantage, and having been paid for the bills three days before-hand, neglected to send them till within two hours of my beginning.

I then set sail for Portsmouth, and went to Basingstoke, with a good musician, well known there, and had two successful nights. I then proceeded to Andover, and then to Shaftesbury, where Mr Shatford was playing. He said his company was quite full, but informed me that Mr Hughes, manager of the Theatre-Royal Weymouth, likewise of the theatres, Exeter and Plymouth Dock, was then at Weymouth, on the point of opening; that he had received a letter from Mr Hughes very lately, and that he was really in want of a performer in my line. With this assurance I ventured, though not pleasant to me, to set off for Weymouth, hap-hazard. I was well received, and immediately engaged, though not upon such terms, I confess, as I think I well deserved, nor such, indeed, as I would have accepted of him in another place, and under more favourable circumstances; I don't doubt but that he thought so too, for at the close of the season he made sufficient amends.

During the six weeks their Majesties were here, the theatre was always honoured with their commands twice, and frequently three times a-week; it was truly a very gratifying sight to see them in the royal yacht on a fine day, taking the pleasure of the sea; walking on the Esplanade with the charming princesses, attended by some of the nobility, generals, and other officers;—a glorious and beautiful cavalcade! It was a pleasing and a novel sight, too, to see them of an evening often walking to the



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theatre in this manner, without any pomp or parade, silently, and unnoticed, but by few at a respectful distance. The day after their Majesties' departure, I had my benefit; and considering this circumstance, had an elegant and numerous assemblage in the boxes, being patronized by the Earl and Countess of Uxbridge. In a week after we closed; and when the manager and I had settled all accounts and expences, he appeared so well satisfied with my exertions, that he made me a compliment of three guineas, in addition to the salary he had agreed to pay me; notwithstanding I had a good benefit, he also gave me the free use of the theatre, scenes, and properties, gratis, for another night. I accordingly engaged a few performers, who could stay, by paying them their night's salaries, which with music, lights, and bills, making my expences very easy, I cleared nearly as much by this benefit (bating Lord Uxbridge's present,) as I did by the first. I was then engaged with the manager for Plymouth-Dock house, with only about six more, till his theatre opened in Exeter. Mr Hughes himself was gone to London; the business was conducted by Mr Foote, his deputy-manager, who was principal proprietor of the Plymouth house, which being a Theatre-Royal, and only two miles from Dock, the play-house there could not properly be licensed, and therefore this was a kind of hand-in-hand business.

Mr Foote, accordingly, had all his company at Plymouth Dock; us few from Weymouth were considered as interlopers, and our presence not agreeable to them. I soon perceived their spleen and jealousy. In his corps he had a fiddler, who thought himself an actor; I knew he looked askance at me, having performed some characters there

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which he had been thrust on for; one night, in particular, being obliged to make a very quick change in order to dance a hornpipe in a Naval Interlude, I had laid out the necessary articles on my dressing-place; when the time came, my pumps were missing, and I could not get ready; they were therefore forced to sing "Rule Britannia," and to make other alterations, till at length the shoes were discovered. This was attended with very unpleasant circumstances, and occasioned such a misunderstanding between Mr Hughes and me, and such a breach between Mr Foote and me, as was never rightly cleared or closed, and, though as far from being suspicious, as I am from being rich, yet I thought then, and continue to think so, that this fiddling actor was the sly malicious contriver of the cause. My time here being but short, and not allowed a benefit, at the expiration of it, I was glad to leave the far greater part of them, to enjoy their own pride and nothingness, and happy to go to my engagement in the peaceable and hospitable city of Exeter.

Here once more I was comfortable, being with a well-selected respectable company, and our own undivided; small occasion for jealousy, as every one had assigned their proper line, with an experienced manager at their head; the business was good—the theatre new and well fitted up—the benefits answered the expectations in general, although I confess mine did not. Unsolicited, unthought of, a gentleman in my behalf had obtained for me the bespeak and patronage of the ladies and gentlemen of the Crescent, consisting then, I think, of about fifteen of some of the first houses in Exeter; they were, of course, connected and acquainted with the first families in the city, and without doubt, in-

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tended on this occasion to use their interest; and when thus the train was well laid and lighted, it would naturally spread from beginning to end. I must here observe, that Mr Hughes, who had more irons in the fire than one, had gone to London, and Mr Foote, previous to the commencement of the benefits, had come here again as his acting manager, and received written instructions from him respecting their regulations, giving us each a week's notice for the same. When I received my paper, it had been altered, and my night fixed nearly three weeks after the original date; whether Mr Hughes had changed his mind, and caused this to be so, or whether Mr Foote, in consequence of our Plymouth Dock disagreement, from pique, had taken upon himself this unwarrantable liberty, I cannot say; but there was no appeal, and I was obliged to abide by the night. In this interim, approaching nearly now to May month, many of my patrons had left the city for watering places, and the death of one gentleman of high respectability, and related to many, was a final wound to me. There had been as much talk about my benefit here as at Litchfield, and like that, from these circumstances, it fell short of all expectations. Our season closed, and it was some time before the Weymouth theatre opened. The first parts I played in Exeter were *Polonius* and the *Grave-digger*, when (I am sorry to say the *late*) Mr Archer performed *Hamlet*. The next night I played *Rodorigo* to his *Iago*, and *Mungo*. He and Mr Hughes had a most serious cast-out, insomuch, that it broke out into an open printed paper war, after which, no reconciliation could take place. Mr Archer, however, had a good benefit. As I now, from various causes, found that I was on little better terms with Mr Hughes, and as Archer and I

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had always been on good ones, to fill up time, we went together to deliver Odes and Select Scenes, at Topsham, Exmouth, &c. where we met with fair encouragement, and had no cause to complain.

As Mr Archer had now obtained an engagement, I went, but reluctantly, to Weymouth. I was then a fortnight too soon, and having left my wife at Exeter, being informed at Dorchester there was a small party playing at Cerne, only eight miles from thence, and that most of them were engaged for Weymouth, I went and joined them, till I heard Mr Hughes had arrived there. In this little scheme was a person who had been with him before, who knew him well, could watch his looks, walk by clock-work, and conform to all his humours. Nine managers out of ten are fond of hearing tittle-tattle; Garrick himself was; why not Mr Hughes? At the same time, they despise these tale-bearers in their hearts, and these beings must know it; but many a tatler and sycophant hold their situations in large theatres, (Oh, shame, shame!) upon no other account. Many foolish parents encourage their children in this paltry trade, which, as the infants find more pleasing to them, the more they enlarge, and are the first steps by which they are taught to lie. In like manner, for the same reason, on a more extensive and dangerous scale, the creatures I have alluded to, never satisfied with the bare weight they have got, however heavy, to please their greedy employer, must constantly add to it, and not abide by simple truth; they are in no fear of being brought face to face, no danger of being detected; the more they seem to please, the more they romance; and so as they get their bread by it, under another cover, they contentedly eat it, though it is stale and dirty. One of this descrip-

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tion, in Old Drury, had by these false reports so injured the late Mr Parsons in Mr Garrick's opinion, that he never spoke to him for three years, all which time he was, in point of business and salary, quite at the tail of his profession. At length, by some means, Mr Garrick having discovered that he had been belied, apologized to him, candidly told him the cause of his overlooking him so long, and from that moment took him by the hand. As a worthy and good physician will consult and consider the cause and nature of his patient's complaint, his habit and constitution, so did Garrick from that time endeavour to discover the genius and ability of Parsons; he did!—the false mirror of slander was broken,—the fair glass of truth represented Parsons to the eyes of Garrick, as a man most worthy in private life, and justly held as an actor, in the highest estimation, by all who ever saw him. To those who never had that pleasure, I will at the same time candidly confess, that, in my humble opinion, he sometimes

"O'erstepp'd the modesty of Nature."

He was not what I would call a *chaste actor;* his humour was broad, but peculiar to himself, and like Clive's and Shuter's, it was irresistible.

The late Mr Peter Garrick, of Litchfield, openly declared he had ever thought me to be a "kind of nephew of his;" and David Garrick himself has said to me, that the late Duchess of Northumberland, and others, of the first rank, have considered me nearly related to him, and he never appeared to be at all displeased at it. I have sometimes been led into the same opinion, not from the vain idea of inheriting a spark of his merit and genius; but in Davies's and Murphy's Life of Garrick, they both

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glance at his failings and foibles, such as speaking in private life, quick, hastily, and impatient; these, without any of his great capabilities, are the only legacies he has left me; to this misfortune, slander and malice, I attribute my misunderstanding with Mr Hughes, and with many others of inferior note.

Discouraged, but from the circumstances alluded to, not much disappointed at the reception I expected to meet with from Mr Hughes, prepared for the worst, as I thought, yet I had no idea that he would bluntly tell me, that "I should never set foot upon his stage again." This roused my spirit, and I replied, that "I would." My wife was still unwell at Exeter; I was in very unpleasant circumstances,—received many mortifications, not only from town's-people, but some then in the company who had been at Plymouth and Exeter, such as I used to call brother comedians, to whom my humble little table and cupboard were always too free and open; even these gentlemen Sir'd and Mr'd me, and some scarcely knew me. "The herd came jumping by me, full of the pasture." I waited, however, in anxious suspense, till the arrival of his Majesty. I resolved to make my case known to him, and intimated my intention to General Lascelles. He approved it, and obligingly added, that he would explain the business to General Manners. Thus far encouraged, I wrote the next day to his Majesty. He was graciously pleased to accept my petition, delivered to him on the esplanade, by General Manners, who condescendingly received it from my hands. In a few minutes, I had the satisfaction to hear the King exclaim, "Oh, ay, Cape Everard, Garrick, Garrick!" I will not, dare not, presume to aver that his Majesty interfered so far in the affairs of an unfortunate insignificant indi-

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vidual as myself, as to *command* the manager to re-engage me. But he deigned to send *that* very evening to the theatre, two gentlemen, his aids-du-camps, or pages, with an expression almost tantamount. I performed the next night, however, and by command of their Majesties, and continued till the close of the season. By this, having gratified my pride more than my pocket, by "setting foot upon his stage again," in opposition to him, knowing that the door of reconciliation was shut, I did not make a fruitless attempt to open it. Here I will freely confess, that I shall always regret that I had any misunderstanding with Mr Hughes, as but for that, he would, to use his own words, "ever have been a friend to me." But if a manager can be too particular in regarding the conduct of his performers, not only *on* but *off* the stage, he was the man,

"It was his nature's plague, to spy into abuse,"
And "Oft his jealousy shap'd faults that were not."

Unfortunately, "I had not slavish temperance enough to watch his looks; yet still I'm sorry that I lost him. After having then been two nights by myself in the rooms patronized by General Lascelles, General Sheriff, and other officers, I took final leave of Weymouth, and set off for Bath.

Mr Dimond, then manager there, opened in *Romeo* in Drury-Lane Theatre, under Mr Garrick, and was well received. I was with both when Garrick advised and recommended him to Bath Theatre, as Messrs Cautherley and Brereton in *his* theatre, were at that time in possession of every character that he might wish to play; he accordingly went, where as actor, and then manager, he continued to the last, most deservedly in the highest estimation.

As I was, of course, well known to him, and being truly informed that the articles of Mr Blisset and

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Mr Biggs were expired, that the first was about to "retire," which he was enabled comfortably to do, (Heaven send that *I* could,) and the other engaged for Drury-Lane Theatre, I flattered myself that it might occasion such a movement, as would leave an opening for me; but here I was disappointed, Mr Dimond acquainting me that Mr Cherry and another actor of repute were already engaged to supply their places: however, I performed *Jerry Sneak*, *Sharp* in the "Lying Valet," and three or four more parts, with some credit to myself; and one night in particular was, I trust, of essential service. On the Monday I went to play *Sharp* at Bristol, and returned in one of the theatrical carriages that night, to perform the same at Bath on the Tuesday, when the opera of the "Duenna" was to be done; Madam Mara, the *part* of *Clara*, and all the boxes completely taken. Mr Biggs, who was to play in it *Isaac Mendoza*, the Jew, was so extremely ill, that the doctor informed him,

> "'Twas at the utmost hazard of his life,
> To venture forth again till he was stronger."

This could not be risked; no one in the theatre on such short notice to supply his place; and to have changed the piece, a heavy loss to the manager, and disappointment to the public. I confessed that I *had* played the part, (and a long one it is,) about sixteen years before. After returning from Bristol about two o'clock in the morning, sat up to re-study it, performed it that night, and *Sharp* afterwards, and thereby prevented danger to one, and disappointment and serious loss to the other.

The Lower Assembly Rooms I then engaged for delivering my recitations, and was twice favoured with an elegant company. About this time, to the "agreeable surprise" and joy of the whole city, Sir



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Sydney Smith unexpectedly and happily arrived at his mother's, after his long durance and miraculous escape. The same night, partly, perhaps, to gratify the longing people with a sight of him, and yet still more, very likely, from a humane motive, an old actor with a large family having a benefit, he gave him permission to announce that he would attend the theatre. His condescension put a clear hundred pounds in the pocket of a worthy man, who else, as usual, might not have gained five pounds. From this it may well be supposed, that the performers having subsequent benefits, made application to him for the honour of his name and patronage, which, though he did not think fit to grant, yet he sent a liberal compliment for his seat, and his presence at that juncture ensured a numerous assemblage. I had now my bills printed for my third attempt in the Assembly Rooms, and ventured, with very little hope of success, to inclose one to Sir Sydney, entreating the honour of his company. Being ushered into his room, and received very politely, I was about to shut the door, when he quickly prevented me, by saying, "he wanted no door shut upon him now." His servant afterwards told me that he slept with his chamber door wide open, that he was obliged to shut the street door very gently, so as not to let him know it, and on no account durst look it, or let him hear the turning of a key; a strong indication of what he must have felt and suffered in his long confinement abroad. As a further confirmation of this, he objected to coming into the Assembly Room; he did not even like the theatre; he only felt comfortable in the open air. He added, that he wished to serve me, that he intended to give a public tea-drinking the next evening in Sydney gardens. He immediately wrote a letter for me to the proprietor there, recommending me, and requiring him to let me have

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what was termed the saloon in the open gardens, and to my surprise added, that I might use his name at the top of my bill. I might indeed well be surprised at his granting me that favour, unsolicited, unthought of, which he refused to performers at the Theatre-Royal. The proprietor readily consented to my having the saloon, and I altered my bills from the Assembly Rooms accordingly. The notice I could give was certainly very short, being only from the morning till afternoon, but it was, I believe, sufficiently known. The gardens, large as they were, as may be imagined, were numerously attended by an elegant company. Sir Sidney had declined taking any tickets of me or at the bar, but came in with a large party, saying to my wife, "I shall answer for these;" so a second and a third time, for he seldom continued in the saloon above half an hour. I waited on him the next day and two following, but could not see him. Previous to this I had made an engagement with the manager of Gloucester; I had positively promised to be with him on a certain day, which was now arrived, and I could attend no longer. Leaving my wife at Bath, I hoped that she would be more successful; but in this affair she proved as unfortunate as myself. After waiting several times to no purpose, the servant told her Sir Sidney was gone to London, and left no word for me, so, in fine, I never received a shilling from him, for himself or for any of his numerous parties. I cannot think, after Sir Sidney's surprisingly condescending behaviour to me that he should forget a business of this nature. Had his company paid only the bare price of admittance, (three shillings,) it must have amounted to ten pounds; and, indeed, from his generosity, and all things considered, I expected no less; nay, some friends

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went so far as to buoy me up with the expectation of receiving double. I can then account for this cruel disappointment in no other way than to suppose—and I am hurt to think so—that his servant, or some other, dealt unfairly by me; a circumstance which I frequently have experienced at benefits and on the like occasions: and those who are guilty of wronging the generosity of their masters, and defrauding the unfortunate, are capable of still worse actions, and are only restrained by fear of the law.

I got now once more into Gloucester;—the theatre, manager, and town's-people all changed;—we soon began benefits;—I had but eighteen shillings a-week; but, when I simply agreed to that, the manager had held out the prospect to me of its being raised, or that I should have a premium for dancing, or my wife engaged, in order to make my situation a little comfortable. He now called me aside, and with great consequential seriousness, asked me if I intended to go with him to their next town, Hereford? I replied that I should like to go there very well, if he could, in any case that he alluded to, make some addition to my salary. As I found this was not to be, I positively declined going any further with him; on which he beckoned one of his intimates, to take notice and bear witness to what I said. I told him he need not have taken that method, for I had long made up my mind, and should trouble him no further. He was a shockingly litigious person; it was dangerous to hold up a finger, or look askance at him; I had no reason to be pleased with him from the first, and still less cause every week; he was insufferably proud, and openly declared his contempt for and antipathy to actors, the people he got his bread by, and very unwillingly ever paid them a shilling! In order to be reven-

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gest on me for not continuing, he immediately fixed my benefit, not only on the worst night in the week, (Friday,) but the Wednesday before, and the Monday after, he allotted to two performers, who he knew would have overflowing houses, (Shuter and Fox,) and that between the two fires it was impossible for me to clear a shilling: that turned out exactly to be the case; I rather lost than gained one by it. The theatre soon after closed; I gladly left it, and cheerfully shook the dust from off my feet.

I was then engaged by the late Mr Watson, manager of the Theatre-Royal, Cheltenham, for the remainder of his season, and was allowed a benefit. I then got the grant from the proprietor of the Assembly Rooms, for my own humble performance. A mean friend of the mean manager at Gloucester waited on him, and endeavoured to prevent this, by representing me in the most unfavourable light, but without effect; the proprietor told him he was master of the rooms, and should let them when he pleased, and to whom he pleased, without consulting any one, and that none had a right to interfere; that Mr King, the master of the ceremonies of the Lower Assembly Rooms, Bath, and who had in that respectable capacity been with him all the season, had spoken extremely well of my performance and my conduct there, and, with himself, had most cordially given his consent for my use of the rooms; that he had great reason to believe I had been hardly treated, and was welcome to his rooms (gratis) more than once, if I thought it would answer. Although many of the fashionable visitants had now left Cheltenham, and, as I may say, the season over, yet I ventured to give out three times, and met with more encouragement than I could reasonably have expected; twice was in the morning, so that my expenses



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were very trifling; and not only having the rooms gratis, but the proprietor and the master of the ceremonies even sent me a guinea each for their own single ticket.

The late celebrated singer, who made the theatre shake in her favourite song of "By the deep nine," the unfortunate Mrs. Clendining, I went and played for her one night at Northleach, ten miles off, and then, though not for the last time, took a grateful leave of Cheltenham.

Being now again at my own disposal, I went to Burford, and then to the seat of the muses—Oxford; there I had permission of the vice-chancellor and mayor of the city to try a night or two. I did so; but to little purpose, being too late in the attempt. It was then on the eve of Christmas vacation, and not only the university, but the whole city were in too great a stir and bustle to pay any attention to me. I now found myself compelled, on account of my wife, to make a retrograde movement, and, having tried my best in different places, at length joined a company at Kidderminster in Worcestershire, where my wife soon joined me. From thence to Bewdley and Tetbury, where, I know not why, the manager broke up. I then went to a party at Ross in Herefordshire; there the manager also broke up, and I was adrift again!—Solicited and encouraged by a few of the best in this company, I applied to the magistrates of Monmouth to grant us permission to perform there a few nights. I confess that I entertained very small hopes of succeeding, but I did; they kindly allowed it. We then had every thing to encounter, and laboured under every disadvantage,—want of scenery, dresses, and, worst of all, money. I had the honour—no, I mean the misfortune—to be placed at the head of this grand enter-

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prize; in other words, denominated manager; so that the owner of the place we called our theatre, the carpenter for the building, the printer for the bills, the musicians, the chandler, stage-keeper, or drummer, all looked up to me for payment, and only me; the others, they said, they knew nothing of.—"There was honour for me!"—We, after much struggling, however, made shift to commence. For the first six nights (our allowed time in fact) we went on, oh, famously! From that, we experienced the want of novelty and numbers, our company being but thin; but, to be sure, twice Gibbet's complement—we were six! four men and two women; yet I had discovered before this that we wanted one thing more—unanimity. Strange to think that only half-a-dozen people could not agree. Bottom, the weaver, in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" could not be contented with playing the principal part, *Pyramus*, but he wanted to be the *Lion*, *Wall*, and *Moonshine*, every thing. So one of our young ladies, not satisfied with having *Lady Randolph*, *Lady Townly*, *Lady Teazle*, and, in fine, all the fine ladies to play in tragedy and comedy, wished to play *Nell*, in the "Devil to Pay," *Lucy*, in the "Virgin Unmasked," the *Romp*, and every thing. This was not only encroaching on the other's line, who contentedly held up her train in the above characters, but what she was unequal to. As Mrs Saunders (a Miss Kelly) was a much superior singer, and, of the two, a better figure, and only desired to keep *that* line of business, the first being so unreasonable, I had, in this little scheme, more trouble and difficulty to settle a play and farce to accommodate both than ever a manager had in the first theatre between two of his most eminent actresses, whom I have too high a respect for to insert on this paltry occasion.



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Two performers and their wives arrived at this juncture, and solicited to be with us. I saw that a little reinforcement became absolutely necessary. They were very much distressed; interest and convenience, with a fellow-feeling, wished them to be admitted. With some trouble, one by one, I got them engaged; a salary was allowed them, more indeed than our scheme could afford, more than I have had in many respectable theatres, and more than they deserved; but in this instance, I must acquit my partners, it was my own simple act, mostly on account of their situations, for which, exclusive of domestic civilities, in the end I received a very poor, in fact, an ungrateful return. These persons, like the rest, looked up to me only for their salaries, which I paid them nightly; and after having what might be called a good house, I have, "many a time and oft," with only a few tickets in my pocket from the printer's, gone home pennyless. In such a little scheme as this, without boasting, I may surely say, "no man ever knew his business better, and did it worse." I must acquit myself to myself, which is one of the best and most pleasing acquittals. If allowed to view myself for a moment in the capacity of manager, such knowledge and abilities as I possessed were in vain exerted to the utmost,—they were unmanageable. Not the sharp rebukes of a Garrick, nor the mild persuasions of a Thomas Sheridan, could have intimidated or shamed them into reason.—(Pardon me, honoured shades, for bringing in your names on such an occasion!)—Maugre my remonstrances and entreaties, I could never get them to the rehearsal till past twelve o'clock, nor ready to begin the play at night till an hour and a half after the time specified. Tired at length with this very irregular conduct, I left them. I don't doubt but

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in some sort they were glad to be rid of me, and be free from any restraint; they persuaded themselves they could, and did make an effort to get on without me; but the magistrates sending them word that unless I continued they should not play another night, they were compelled to come, cap in hand, and solicit my return. From a feeling motive for the persons last engaged and their families, more than from any selfish, or other consideration, I complied with very great reluctance, for I knew they were incorrigible. It soon proved so: scarce a fortnight had elapsed, when a lady of the first distinction and connexions in Monmouth sent for me, and told me that herself, with a large party, would bespeak and patronize the "School for Scandal" the next night, if we would begin *nearer to the time.* I gave my word that I should mention this particularly to the company; but as "a man may lead his horse to water, yet cannot make him drink unless he list," so I could do no more in my capacity than persuade and attempt "to lead;" but, madam, I can answer for myself,—I will take upon me to say, that, at all events, the curtain shall go up (for we had a curtain, ay, and three or four scenes too) exactly at ten minutes past seven. "That will do—we depend on you." On the night, the house full, I kept my word; up it went, and on I went, compelled to tell a very genteel company that I had said and done all I could, but we were not ready to begin; nor did we till past eight o'clock. As in this scheme I scarcely performed a single character that I wished to do, only such as others would not, indeed could not do; for, "be it known to all men by these presents," that out of our now six men, there were three older than myself, all unstudied, refractable, ungovernable.

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"And we were simple actors all,
Some fat, some lean, some short, some tall,
Our pride was great, our merit small."

So in this instance, I had to play *Charles* and *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, another *Snake* and *Crabtree*, &c. Beginning more than an hour after the time, on went *Snake*; soon after, when I was going on for *Backbite*, there was no *Crabtree* to be found,—he was absent without a furlough. I ventured on without him, and, knowing the character, blended the parts, asked questions and gave answers to myself, and got through the scene as well as possible. This last circumstance, and what I felt at the commencement, I thought were sufficient mortifications for *this* evening, but I was sadly mistaken: wishing now to "push on" and "keep moving," I wanted to begin the second act immediately, when, behold you, even at *this time*, *Lady Teazle* had not arrived! I sent for her to no purpose. At length *Joseph Surface*, her enamorato, went himself for her, and in about half an hour more produced her. She was ready dressed it is true, but she took some little time in *adjusting*,—at length we began the second act about half-past nine o'clock. When all was over, and at a late hour as usual, I had many painful tasks as usual; and here, as I've hinted, no man ever did his business worse. Paying the four salaries, rent, lights, music, carpenter, sharing the remainder with this dissatisfied party, and not able patiently to endure their squabbling, constantly going home without a shilling. Their greediness of gain and their meanness were far superior to their abilities; the whole set would have quarrelled about the division of a candle: if a servant came with money in his hand for half-a-dozen tickets, they were all eager to serve him, though I was on the spot—they were all managers; but if

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the mayor and magistrates sent for the manager to the Town-hall, which case occurred more than once, in that, and any other painful duty. I will do them the justice to declare that they always acknowledged *me*. The last time I was sent for, the mayor very pleasantly said to me, "You asked permission, sir, only for about six nights, or so, and you have been here now eight weeks—pray, how much longer do you wish to stop?" I replied, that in behalf of the company, I should be glad to be allowed to have benefits; we played but twice a-week, there would not be above six, and they should commence directly. This being granted, off we went. Every one was a considerable gainer by this scheme except my simple self, and I was happy to get out of their broils and tumults, and leave them to seek their fortunes.

Shortly after, I joined Mr Masterman, who had been manager above twenty years in many of the principal towns in Wales, and was then playing at Abergavenny; they were at that time on their benefits, so that I was only an occasional actor there, engaged as any performer might want me, which being almost every night, it answered my end much better than if I had been regularly employed by the manager. At that time, too, the company, by desire of the town, performed three nights a-week at a small place only six miles off, called Crickhowell. The theatre there was a large genteel room at the head inn, but not large *enough*, as many people were disappointed every night that could not get in; the scheme was troublesome but profitable. On closing, I understood that our next destination was for the summer season at Swansea, and we should have at least a fortnight's vacation; I therefore made a bit of a circuitous rout, and took Myrther Tydvill in my way, in order to wait upon my friend and patron

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Richard Crawshaw, Esq., the place and person I have before mentioned when at Weybridge. I was hospitably received, which I had no doubt of. He sent after supper his butler and three of his clerks to the head inn for my nightly accommodation, which perhaps he could not conveniently, or did not think proper to do at his own house, and which I am confident I could not have procured in this place, and at this time, but for the use of his name. 'Twas lucky too that I was so well guarded: we were shown into a large parlour; my escort took the farther end, while I, Englishman-like, in the month of June, got near the fire. There might be about ten in the room when we entered—all Welchmen. I had not been seated three minutes when one of these natives, a very tall athletic man, (and I declare before I had opened my lips), rose from his seat, and, speaking half-Welch half-English, was, to my surprise, very rude. He was about to put me out of the room, when his party all stood to his side; my friends, of course, as in duty bound, interfered, and in a moment we were all in an uproar. There never was, even in the purlieus of St Giles's, (I speak it with all due respect to that place, and with no view to lessen its importance,) there never was a row kicked up with such a formidable aspect in so short a time. My antagonist and his party were at least ten; mine, including my poor self, considerably the least, and, in this case, by far the most insignificant of the whole, were but five—two to one against us at starting!—These odds, however, in many places would not have signified much; but *here*, the words "fair play" were not understood, either in English or Welch. The first pugilist in the world would stand no chance here but a bad one—the only one I had of avoiding the pithy powerful paws of

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my opponent, was a little more knowledge perhaps of the scientific art, and *that* I saw would be of no avail. What one cannot do, two or even a dozen would accomplish by every foul and unmanly means in the most brutal manner, and they think it no disgrace to their manhood. My guards were, of course, well known to these ruffians, and they declaring that they came with me from Mr Crewshaw's house, where I had been all day, by his express order; that I was an old acquaintance of his, long known to him in England, and was under his immediate protection, silenced them at once before any contest commenced. Mr Crewshaw was magistrate for the county—almost king of Myrther—employed vast numbers—half these fellows very likely were in his pay—they durst not be uncivil—they made a kind of apology by saying they mistook me for a Frenchman. Supposing I had, I thought to myself, if I sat down speechless why should I be insulted? but I knew that if they imagined me to be an Englishman, my treatment would have been but little or no better; if a Scotsman, much worse; and as to an Irishman, he had better "go to the devil and shake himself" than be among them;—I would not, for any premium, ensure his life for a week!—mine, being a stranger, would have been that night in imminent danger, if not lost, but for my powerful protection. I was very thankful, however, that concord was restored in as little a time as discord reigned, and that in three minutes we all sat down as quietly and peaceably as if no fracas had happened. I gladly now left "an Englishman's fireside," and took my seat with my friends; when, after taking a cheering glass, they departed, and I immediately went up to my room, where I was again grateful for its having only a single bed, and that I



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could lock the door. I did not rest well. The noise of the hammers, the sound of wheels, reflections of fire, roused me about one o'clock, and awakened curiosity. I looked out. It happened then to be very dark, and although I had seen many artificial scenes in my time yet this was *Nature's* scene, and to me a new one. The various sounds and sights were grand, awful, terrific. Numbers of fires bursting as it were from the earth, in explosions like volcanos, seemed, to a stranger like me, to threaten immediate destruction to town and country all around. I was obliged to reflect that this was ingenuity, was all the work of art, and that while I was inactive, hundreds by it were employed in getting a hard-earned, but very comfortable subsistence for themselves and families; yet I could not help longing to see the day-light. The glorious sun's appearance would soon diminish these sparks and seeming eruptions, and the impression they had made would quickly vanish as they disappeared. So, after a while, considering Young's "Night Thoughts," I wished a good night to the night, and retired to my couch to try once more

. . . . "To sleep her into morning."

I was up before any one in the house; the prospect was delightfully changed! After walking, I went, as desired, to breakfast with my friend, if that be not too familiar an expression; when I was taking leave, he put two guineas in my hand, and said he should perhaps see me before the summer was past; his invitation to stay longer I declined, presently walked off, and the next day walked into Swansea.

Here, which was always considered as the manager's head-quarters—here, where he had constantly been for more than twenty summers—here, to my

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great astonishment, there was no regular theatre, and on my arrival, he had but just procured a place to play in! and, at last, what was this? a large place, 'tis true, but badly situated; very inconvenient to the men, who were obliged to dress in a stable. This place, called a Theatre, was in a middle story; the manager had no occasion to caution us, in Belcour's words,—

"Overhead there's a scaffold,—under foot there's a well;"

but with great truth and justice he might have said, —Over head there's a Catholic chapel,—under foot there's a blacksmith's shop. This was really the case; and after a few more idle days, this place was fitted up for the reception and entertainment, not only of the respectable inhabitants of Swansea and its neighbourhood, but also for the numerous and genteel visitants who came from Bath and other places, for a little variety, and for sea-bathing. Our rehearsals here were frequently disturbed by our noisy neighbours *below;* often suspended, from a sense of decency and decorum, and out of respect, to those *above* us; "the hand of the diligent was making rich" below us; spiritual concerns occupied those nearest to the skies; and temporal affairs, or, to use a Methodistical phrase, "The devil's works" were going on in the centre! At length, we opened with "Every One has his Fault." I had studied the long part of *Harmony; Solus*, which I had always played before, being pre-engaged; so was *Sir Abel Handy*, and I had to play *Sir Philip Blandford.* In the "Heir-at-Law," *Dr Pangloss* and *Lord Duberly* both engaged, and, for the first time in my life, I played an Irishman, *Kenrick.* I soon discovered that till some change happened in the company, I stood no chance of coming in edge-ways, at least not to play any part in my line that I wished for;

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one performer had been with him five-and-twenty years, from his first setting out as manager; it was but fair he should have his choice, and keep possession of his characters, which "heaven forbid *my thoughts* should rob him of!" He would not be put out of his line, and he was right;—he was a very confined actor;—it might be better for the public and the stage if many more were confined. Another, his Hero, his Proteus, had been with him many years; he had, when a new piece was getting up, the privilege of choosing his part, whether in tragedy or comedy, and he always in both made choice of what he thought the first or best part, whether it suited him or not, when, at the same time, a third or fourth-rate character he might have been very decent in. This actor was very different from my friend alluded to before; this was *unconfined;* Garrick's versatility is lost in the comparison; 'twas

"Broad and general as the casing air."

He enclosed, engaged, and took in every thing! *Richard, Hamlet, Romeo, Macbeth, Othello, Shylock, Lord Townly, Don Felix, Sir Peter Teazle, Octavian, Ollapod, Young Rapid, Darby, Dicky Gossip, Fribble,* &c. &c. &c. to the end of the chapter. With such a universal genius, we had no occasion for so many men in the company, and still less for eleven women; but as it was a salary one, to be sure that was chiefly the manager's concern. The salaries, however, were very low; none but the hero, I believe, having more than twelve shillings per week. As, from the number of women engaged, it was clear to me that he could make no situation for my wife, and as he could not allow me more than the fixed general salary, without his wife's knowledge,

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and setting the whole party in an uproar; and, whatever my deserts might be, it must be evident that myself and wife could not live upon one single salary of twelve shillings per week;—to reconcile all this, the manager proposed, in addition to that, to allow me seven shillings and sixpence per week, if I agreed to dance occasionally, assuring me that I should not be called upon above once a fortnight at most. Upon these high terms we closed; a great amends to us was made by the manager's charges at the benefits; at Swansea eight pounds, and every other place only six pounds. A performer had, too, another consolation; that if, in cash and tickets together, he had but one pound in the house, the manager exacted no more; if he had the misfortune, by accident, or from bad weather, not to gain, at least he was sure not to lose any thing. I waited on Mr Crewshaw, of Myrther, the morning before my benefit, who had arrived at Swansea two days before; I asked him to favour me with his name at the head of my bill, which he readily granted. I played *Lord Ogleby* in the "Clandestine Marriage;" it was bespoke twice afterwards; I had a trifle more than thirty pounds in the house, and three guineas from Mr. Creshaw. My charges and expenses being so low, I cleared as much by it as if I had taken sixty pounds in some theatres. Could I have had my night sooner, it might have been half as much more, but many visitants to whom I was known were gone. It soon became time for *us* to go; so, after a pretty successful season, we left Swansea, and soon arrived at our next destined place, Chepstow.

Having been at Swansea, I was prepared to expect no regularly built theatre at Chepstow, though I think it deserves one. In our phrase, a spirited little town, and some respectable families in the vici-



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nity, and the landlords of two capital inns, gave great support to us. This place, I understood, was the very first in which Mr Masterman, who was our master, (or, more agreeable to our delicate feelings, and the technical term of the theatre, our manager, in the opera style, "le directeur,") trode the boards as an actor; but then it happened by chance; it was only by way of amusement; he was then very young, and a midshipman. He has now two sons in high rank and estimation; one is a captain, the other a lieutenant, in the army and navy. Chepstow, however, ("who can controul his fate,") Chepstow was the first place where he took a small theatric corps. Had he failed here, in his first outset, like many more whom I have known, some of whom are still living, and hold their heads very high, who began, like him, without ten shillings in the world,—had they or he been unsuccessful in their first town, they never could have gone to a second; "their names would have been extinct;" "no more Priuli heard of;" but "success makes people vain." Our theatre here was a very large room in a public-house, well fitted up; "pit and gallery," (boxes out of the question.) We had great business, and so had the public-house. The benefits were all good; I had, I think, about twenty-five pounds, charges six. At the end of the season we went from here to Monmouth. This place is only about sixteen miles from Chepstow; and yet, although the distance was so small, I cannot help remarking that I wondered that the difference in price of provisions was so great; mutton, at Chepstow fivepence halfpenny per pound, at Monmouth tenpence; and in most other articles nearly the same disproportion. I knew not how to account for it; "there was something more than natural in this, if philosophy could find

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it out." At this time, too, corn was particularly high, and still kept rising. A rich farmer in the neighbourhood, who had his granaries and barns so full that his sacks were almost bursting open the doors, was repeatedly entreated to bring his grain to market. "No," says he to a friend, "it will fetch more next week." At length, when he thought it would get no higher, he promised to bring it; he did so, and took it all back again. Providence beheld the poor, and occasioned this week a very sudden and wonderfully great fall in the price; he could not bear the thought of selling his at the reduced statement, went home vexed, after being abused and laughed at, and hanged himself! "He fell, unpitied and abhorred."

While here, another at this time met the same fate from the hand of the law; he kept a small public-house here. Some years before he had been convicted, and received sentence of death for horse-stealing. His wife was a respectable woman, related or connected to some of the first families in the place and neighbourhood. Perhaps, owing to this, his sentence was softened into transportation for life; then into fourteen years; then seven; at last, to only four years confinement in Gloucester jail. After being there about three years he broke out, was retaken, and got off by only staying the full time out. Being liberated, this public-house was a cover; but by those who knew him, it was supposed that he was still a great dealer in horses. He had formerly lived with a gentleman in the town, who had been a great friend to him on many occasions, and to whom he now owed nearly fifty pounds; he knew every avenue of the house, —he broke it open, and plundered it. No suspicion, however, fell on him, and he was very active

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in causing an innocent girl and others to be taken up. Among the articles advertised that were stolen was a silver tankard, which he had sold at Gloucester; the whole was proved against him; his generous benefactor used every effort to save him, but deservedly he suffered.

Whether the little party I was with here had somewhat blunted the edge of theatrical curiosity or not, I cannot say; but the business here, upon the whole, was but indifferent, and many of the benefits, like my own, turned to no great account. The season over, in order to fill up the time, and break the journey, we stopped about a month at a place called Newport in our road, and then, for the summer, repaired again to Swansea.

Here was now a theatre fitted up at a great expense, well situated in the principal street, which the manager had before, and might have continued standing for the trifling rent of ten pounds a-year; but his wife would not consent to it, and he, "good easy man," was forced to yield. Had that been the case, he might have opened the campaign last year a month sooner; what a saving would that have been to him and the company! instead of which, we were walking about the town like fools, and many of the visitants, in the evening, scarcely knowing how to dispose of themselves. This building and rent cost him nearly eighty pounds, and the carpenter troubled him for it. His bill was taxed and considerably reduced; yet what it stood him in then, with the costs, not to speak of the trouble and anxiety, would have paid his first demanded rent for five or six years; so much for calculation and economy. The visitants, our own company, and our business being much the same, I shall only say, that when we finished, it was intended to proceed

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to Carmarthen, it being then the proper season to go there, a distance of only thirty-one miles, and the town expecting us; but this was not to be; a friend of the manager's at Haverfordwest, thirty-two miles beyond Carmarthen, had wrote to inform him, that another manager ("another Simon Pure,") had arrived there, very strongly recommended, and that most of the town were much in his favour; that the magistrates there, however, in consideration of his having been there so many years and his large family, had determined that no other company should come but his, provided he brought them immediately. In consequence of this, off we immediately went through Carmarthen, and a journey now of 63 miles, in a very severe month (November). Here again we had no theatre, nor any thing like one could be procured, nor a decent substitute for one. In a paltry public-house, we played in a paltry room up two stories high, with a few seats put down, miscalled pit and gallery; these seats before the curtain, at the very utmost would not contain a receipt of above nine pounds; yet, wonderful to say, at some of the benefits the amount was twenty, twenty-five, six, eight, and one night thirty-two pounds! In order to account for this, I must observe that our scenes were taken entirely down, seats borrowed from the inns or Assembly Room, if they had one,—the stage filled, so that it was very difficult to get on, even by entreaty,—they would readily let you get off. On these occasions, too, many persons paid who never heard a line of the play nor cared about it. They were well contented below, and with sending for bottle after bottle for the company. By request of the inhabitants of Milford Haven, eight miles lower, we went there twice or thrice a-week, and had a new-built un-

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finished house almost in the sea, in the cutting-cold month of January, for our theatre. It was crowded here just as at Har'fordwest, and the people's behaviour kind and free, which, considering our freezing situation, we had reason to be glad of; it was else, "a custom more honour'd in the breach than the observance." Upon the whole, it was at this time a very painful duty to me, and very unprofitable. Small as this town is, it is well peopled, sends two members to Parliament, and has two market days. The hero of this company, whom I have mentioned before, who played every thing, and nothing but what he liked, had a very large family. This circumstance is, I have experienced, generally more in a man's favour than against him; where, on that account, he will constantly find many friends, when my wife and self, without any children living, might in vain look for one; and as to a single man, —oh, he can live upon nothing! This hero, too, was a native of Monmouth, and beside all these advantages, had relations and friends in every town and all over the country, who were continually sending him presents of every kind: in this place he had three great benefits, if not four. One of the company who had but newly joined us at Swansea, luckily for him now, was born here; his wife luckily brought him a little one here. These circumstances operated so strongly in their favour, that the town was not content with making them two very great benefits, but insisted upon their having a third, which, with the astonishing variety of numberless presents that were sent them from all quarters of almost every description, must have amounted to above L.130. There was another, an old standing party here, our musician, a very good one, and better off than any actor in the company. He had a

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guinea a-week constantly the year round, if there was no play for a month. He had always many scholars in each town, but it never interfered with his business at the theatre. His wife played most of the elderly ladies. They had a daughter who had not long been married to a worthy young man, very respectable on the stage, if not capital, as actor and singer, even in pantomime. He caught a violent cold at Swansea; deprived of the use of his limbs, as I was at Portsmouth; by advice went into the Bath Infirmary before our arrival here, where, poor fellow, he died. They had likewise another daughter at home with them. She had formerly played in the company as a child, and then suspended till lately grown up to womanhood, was re-engaged. This interim she had industriously employed at home as milliner, dress-maker, &c. for the ladies. This party knew every person in every town; I must, in justice, say that they were very diligent, and "never missed an opportunity." With these were several who had been many years in the company who possessed the same happy advantages, and were equally assiduous. I wish they had been contented with only promoting their own interest, without attempting to injure mine; but my two first benefits at Swansea and Chepstow created jealousy and envy, after which I never succeeded. Here at Har'fordwest, and elsewhere, I was an entire stranger; my wife too, not being engaged, and scarcely going ever to the theatre, or any where indeed, above once in two months, I was considered by the town as a single man; these parties too, who had the ear of all, "gently contrived to inform them," that I had not only as good a salary as any one in the company, (not exactly a fact, and at the same time not observing that it was but twelve

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shillings per week,) but that I had also three half-crowns a-week for dancing; that I would not even then dance for their benefits, &c. According to my agreement with the manager, I had no right; I was not bound in duty to do that, nor did I dance for every benefit it is true; but I'll aver that I did so for every one who thought proper to *ask* me. With the propagation of these matters, and no doubt some occasional embellishments to my disadvantage, what could I hope for or expect but disappointments and mortifications among such insidious parties? Notwithstanding my utility—I will not speak of abilities—I believe I was the only one that did not clear a crown here by my benefit; and after this, was convinced that any where else I should not in future gain a shilling.

Now, "fully sated with their luscious banquets," and the town at length sufficiently sated too, we should, agreeably to the plan and the town's expectations, have gone to Pembroke, a short way from here, where they had formerly been and met with great encouragement; but their success at Har'ford-west had detained them so long, and fearful to disappoint or give any further umbrage to Carmarthen, the time and circumstances would not allow it; so there the company went, which, on my own account, I was not sorry for.

Here, in an old place fitted up in the old way, we went on in the old manner. One circumstance, however, deserves notice: we were honoured one night with the name and patronage of Lord Nelson. Our manager having been in the navy, and a son of his being then in it, a lieutenant, easily obtained that favour. I need not say the house was full; many could not get in. His lordship sent him ten guineas, if not more. The next morning early, it so happen-



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ed that I was passing near his inn and about that quarter, with a blue great coat on, a cocked hat and cockade, a sword under my left arm, and my right hand in my bosom, and accordingly (bearing, as I believe and have been told, some resemblance to his lordship,) had the honour of being mistaken for him, and, to my surprise, by some even saluted as such; of course I made all haste to change my appearance, merely accidental, fearing it might be misconstrued into design. His lordship, it was understood, was going down to Milford Haven to inspect the harbour, &c. By some oversight or negligence, the magistrates had made no kind of preparation or given him any reception; he went away displeased, saying "there was not a gentleman in the town." To retrieve this error, they were determined to shew him proper respect on his return; but he disappointed them by taking another rout. This was little better than a twelvemonth before he sailed on his last glorious but fatal expedition.

The season now approaching, we returned to Swansea; towards the conclusion of which, the manager came to me one day, with a letter in his hand, informing me that he had just received it from some ladies of great respectability and property, a few miles off, who had engaged a very large and elegant house in town, which was now fitting up for them as a boarding-school, they had requested him to engage masters for music and drawing, and having seen me dance, if it was agreeable to us both, should be glad if I would attend them as dancing-master. He added, that he did not wish to lose me, but he had often heard me say I wished to settle; (Heaven knows I have wished it heartily many years) that if I accepted this offer, a performer from Ireland, in my line, had wrote to him, and he would



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engage him. I wrote to the ladies immediately—saw them soon in town, and agreed with them. I was to attend them, as customary, two days in the week. I had also a very good prospect, after Christmas, of having forty pupils in a town school of boys, long established, which would have occupied two days more. The days for my ladies' school, agreeably settled by them, were *Mondays* and *Thursdays*; for the other, when it took place, *Tuesdays* and *Fridays*. Many respectable inhabitants in the vicinity had promised me likewise to have their children; so that, in fine, I had every reason to think that I should be sufficiently employed, and at length have a settled situation. The manager told me there had been no regular dancing-master in Swansea for above two years; the last that was there, his wife having a great fortune left her suddenly, at his proper time gave it up. He likewise said, that the late dancing-master, who had not, certainly, the public advantages which I had, as belonging to the theatre gave me, had in confidence told him that his income there was about L.300 a-year. I had every reason now to be perfectly satisfied—enjoyed the prospect of being at last in a settled situation, and the thoughts of the fatigue I should undergo gave me no concern, especially as I hoped I might have sufficient employment without going much out of town. Our season closed, our company all gone. As, in many places, lodgings are dearer in winter than in summer, so on the other hand, in all that are denominated bathing or watering places, like Buxton, Cheltenham, Margate, Brighton, Weymouth, they are dearer in summer; it is the people's harvest time—the proper season for it, and they must "make hay while the sun shines." As I now might reasonably expect some young visitants

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for private tuition, I thought it prudent to change my lodgings; accordingly, I engaged and took two genteel rooms, and had the use of a third, for a mere trifle more than I had paid for *one* all the summer. I gratefully hugged myself in the idea of no longer being a wanderer, and cheerfully commenced my career. As it was now only wanting the half quarter to Christmas, and I could not expect the school to fill till after that vacation, I was by no means disappointed or discouraged at having in this time only eight young ladies, and three or four in the town; it was, indeed, only begun as an opening, which, in fact, it scarcely had, when a serious preventative happened from the school then receiving any more ladies; this was no other than the scarlet fever, which had broke out among the younger branches with a very threatening aspect; but as its consequences did not seem to be fatal, and as about Christmas it began to subside, I was in hopes that during our vacation of three weeks, it would be safely done away. To remain quite inactive all this time was against my inclination; I thought likewise, that "a penny saved, was a penny got," as poor Richard says, so I resolved to make a little tour. I went first to a town, where I intended to try my fortune; to my surprise; there was a company of players there, not comedians, nor his Majesty's servants, but "all the men and women merely players!" Had I been compelled to have asked these people for a situation, I felt I could not have got one, but I was not reduced to it. I staid there two days; when I left them they were much surprised, and offered me an engagement, but "Cains scorned it."

I proceeded then to Brecknock, or Brecon, the county town of Brecknockshire. Here I intended

to try one night, and had partly engaged the Assembly Room. I presently understood that it must be undertook on a very high scale, or not at all. Had I got, which I might have done, some letters of recommendation, I might, perchance, have succeeded; but not doing that, being then a total stranger there, my heart failed, and I gave it up. I then returned to my friend and patron, Mr Crewshaw, at Myrther. I stopped here a week—was encouraged to give out a night's performance by myself. I well knew that it was a service of danger; all that I could do or say would have been caviar to the multitude, "they knew nothing, nor would'nt be taught." On my departure, Mr Crewshaw put again two guineas in my hand, and I returned to Swansea. On my return, I must lament that the face of things were entirely changed, as I observed, the scarlet fever had worn away, but in my absence, a more formidable disease had arrived, the measles! This had spread and afflicted men, women, and children; it was epidemic—a plague; persons of the very first respectability, close neighbours, would not see or even hear from each other.

I had only two young ladies at the boarding-school, whom I was obliged to attend for two days in the week, and engaged my time as if I had two-and-sixty; at length, afraid of venturing out, they left. A Miss Jones, the first young lady, of about fifteen years of age, from whose hand I received the first half guinea as entrance money, she was the only one that died a victim to this disorder. The ladies, the mistresses of this school, were, as I understood, persons of great property, and undertook this, on account of unpleasant domestic occurrences, to alleviate and amuse their minds, more than with an idea of much gain. I must now beg leave to

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observe the rock I split upon. They offered me a certain sum, to be paid quarterly, of L.40 per annum, in which case I had nothing to do with chance; on the other side, they left it to me to receive half a guinea entrance, for myself entirely, from each lady, and fifteen shillings per quarter from them, with a deduction then of half a crown from each, for the use of the room, and for the mistresses. Had I made the first agreement, I should have had a certain income; forty pounds a year, assuredly, would have enabled me to have stood firm, to have kept my ground; with the prospect of the town-school, and the chance of other scholars; but now I had only to wait, perhaps, a quarter of a year, or more, without the prospect of a shilling coming in; but at this, or perhaps a more distant period.

The pleasing idea of having obtained a settlement which delusive hope held out to me, now vanished. Imperious necessity commanded, and I reluctantly was compelled to quit the field, and go on the forlorn hope—again to wander. I therefore went off to Chepstow, to my former manager, where the company then was. He was, on my arrival, dangerously ill, and in a few days after, where he first entered as manager, he made his final exit.

I did not then entertain the smallest wish to be with them. His wife died at Carmarthen about eight months from that time; I will not say, "She should have died hereafter;" but, if we do not believe in predestination, I think if she had died seven years sooner, he would have lived seven years longer. I might say much more respecting her,

"Save that for reverence to some alive
I give a sparing limit to my tongue."

I shall acknowledge here that I may look at



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home;—that I have faults enough of my own, without mentioning those of others;—and why, indeed, should I speak of mine? Any merits—any abilities, any kindness to others, that I may have been thought to possess, or had it in my poor power to show, I have glanced at as modestly as I well could, while retaining the fact. What need to blazon my demerits and imperfections? None! For, as the great Sheridan says in his "Critic," "We shall always find some damn'd good-natured friend or another to speak of them!"

As the performer from Ireland, engaged in my line, had suddenly left the company, I made certain of being well received at Chepstow; but I had left my wife at Swansea till I was assuredly settled. Being, as I have stated, wonderfully disappointed, wishing not to get too far from my wife, on account of the fatigue to her, and the expense to me, I joined a little company, a very few miles off, playing then at Uske; from thence to Pontipool and Newport, which was the point I wished to gain; the last being in the direct road from Swansea, and where my wife readily came to me. These three last mentioned places are extremely pleasant and healthy; the fruitful charming winding river of Uske, the rocks, the mountains, hills, dales, the valleys, and the extensive plains opposite, may, altogether, be taken almost in one view, and form the most beautiful picturesque wild romantic scene that the eye, in one immediate glance, can behold! When I spoke of the inhabitants of Myrther Tydvill, I by no means meant to attach their character to all, or indeed any other part of Wales;—no—that is a place by itself—there is not such another, perhaps, in the world. I have found in these small towns and the neighbourhood, great civility, kindness, and hospitality.

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As soon as propriety permitted me, I left this party; and now, wishing to get once more into "the native soil in which I grew," having received an offer, I set off for Tewksbury, in Glo'stershire;—here, after playing only one night, we were stopped. The manager had been there the year before, and, relying upon the good-will of the magistrates, had neglected to apply for and get his license. A great maker of candles, or tallow-chandler, who, the season before had, in that capacity, received many pounds from the manager, and who was not indebted to him a penny, had newly come into office;—maugre all the persuasions of the first people, proud to show his authority, he obstinately persevered, and we were compelled to give it up. The building had cost L.50, and they had only played a week before my arrival; in that time the manager had given a song, which highly pleased, and each verse in it finished with,

"Come, my boys, let's drink—be hearty;
Damn the French and Buonaparte."

The lads of the town, of an evening, would pass by this tallow-chandler's door, especially if he was in the shop, singing,

Come, my boys, let's drink—be merry;
Damn the French and Hartlebury."*

This other unlucky business ended, I proceeded, but slowly, to Glo'ster, and was then engaged for Cheltenham, by Messrs Ray and Gibbon, to whom Mr Watson, the proprietor, had let this and his other theatres for the term of three years. The first night I played *Lord Duberly*; but the latter manager saved me a great deal of trouble by playing

* His name.

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my line of business. When the season was about half over, the races or assizes took place or were held at Warwick, Tamworth, and Walsall, to which part of the company were to go with Mr Gibbon, and the rest to continue with Mr Ray in Cheltenham. It was my lot to be fixed upon and desired to go the circuit, a very troublesome expedition; and by which, considering the travelling expenses and dearness of lodgings at those times, I knew I could not be a gainer, though, for the month, allowed double salary; out of which, too, I had ordered twelve shillings a-week for my wife. We went to these places, and in new-built theatres performed every night, travelling on the Sunday. The last place, Walsall, we were at a fortnight, and then had to make an expeditious journey of ninety miles back to Cheltenham after which we began benefits. I had the "Clandestine Marriage;" played *Lord Ogleby*, and introduced, for the first time, a young lady to the stage, in the character of *Fanny*. The late Earl of Leicester, happening to be there, to whom I had been known for many years, had half a dozen tickets of me, and the next morning sent me L 5.

Col. M'Neale, and his wife, Lady Anne M'Neal, nearly related to the late Margravine of Anspach, had a son of about seven years of age, and whom, by their desire, I had latterly attended, in order to facilitate his education. They now wished me to go with them, for the same purpose, to London, offering me a guinea a-week for a twelvemonth, to come to him two or three hours in a day, and five pounds for our carriage to town. I accepted their proposal and accordingly went. I luckily got, the day after my arrival, into a comfortable and pleasant lodging, at only one pound a month, within three doors of their house, near to Hans Square, by



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Sloane-street. I had flattered myself, having such a pupil, with hopes of being soon recommended to another or two, though not expecting such equally good terms; but found there were so many seminaries and private tutors in this quarter, "of more merit and better interest than myself," that I gave up the idea. I had the honour of being known to Lord Erskine for many years—my wife, from her infancy, and he much respected and befriended her worthy parents;—he was at this time Lord High Chancellor of the united kingdom. I waited on him; was received with his lordship's usual wonderful affability, condescendingly saying, "Well, friend Everard, what are you doing?" Soon after, he looked out and gave me writing, sufficient employment for many months, so that I had now no occasion to be idle; and when I wanted a pound or two, I had only to hint it to his worthy gentleman—but indeed, I had little occasion to do that. I went on thus till the September following, when, on the opening of Drury-Lane Theatre, his lordship told me he should speak to and use his interest with Mr Sheridan to re-engage me. This he did numberless times, and even wrote to him without effect. As to his not thinking of *me*, I did not wonder at it; but I was surprised indeed, month after month, that his lordship's request was unnoticed. At length, when I called on him one morning, and it was then the middle of April, he seemed vexed and out of patience;—his gentleman and coach at this time even waiting for him, saying, "Everard, come with me." I went at a decent distance, without guessing *where to*, from his house in Lincoln's-Inn-fields, to Mr Justice Graham in Great Queen-street, who was then president of the board of management for Drury-Lane Theatre. Being inform-

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ed by a servant that he had not yet come down stairs, his lordship went, *sans ceremonie*, up to his chamber-door, and goodnaturedly, familiarly, called out, "Graham, here's my old friend Everard with me: what is the reason that he is used in this manner? Since last October, Sheridan has promised me to give him a situation in Drury-Lane;—he never asked me a favour twice. Tell him I am very angry with him, and though your season is almost over, that I insist upon his being engaged immediately." I was. I went on the stage that *very evening*, and had the happiness and the honour of representing one of the *Forty Thieves*; yet, although I had nothing to say, and very little to do, still I felt myself deficient in figure, weight, and consequence. It was not now two or three to one, but thirty-nine against me;—I was the least thief in the whole set! I was allowed twenty-five shillings per week for the remainder of the season. Lord Erskine still continued to give me enough to transcribe;—Lady Anne M'Neale had also recommended me to attend a young lady, the daughter of James Yeo, Esq. in Sloane-street, and sister of the much esteemed Captain Yeo. I had a guinea a-week for attending this amiable young lady, for two hours in the day; beyond which I shall willingly and gratefully acknowledge their politeness, their great condescension, their generosity. Thus employed by Lord Erskine, Lady Anne M'Neale, and James Yeo, Esq. the summer went on pleasantly and profitably. On the opening of Drury-Lane Theatre, in September, I changed my summer residence, and took up my abode in winter-quarters, being engaged there now at two pounds per week. Let me observe, (to those, who, happily, are not acquainted with theatrical matters), that this salary

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is only what they call play-house pay. When they open in September, but perform only three nights in the week, for five or six weeks;—the same (alternately,) at Covent-Garden house. Then, no actor receives any more than half salary; my two pounds reduced to one. They play for six weeks in Lent, only four times a-week. My salary was then only L.1, 6s. 8d. per week;—then Passion-week—no plays allowed there—the theatres shut—"no play, on pay"—"no song, no supper"—the 30th of January, King Charles's martyrdom—Christmas eve—Christmas day, ditto. When I was a child, the theatres were shut for six weeks, on account of the death of King George II.; as Garrick said in his interlude of the "Farmer's Return from London,"

"I hope, from my soul, I shall ne'er see another."

Adding all these together, with a summer vacation, wherein none but the great *stars* could shine, and whereon I was scarcely allowed to gaze, my salary for the year barely amounted to L.1, 2s. a situation that some might think enviable, but I confess I did not feel it. "*devoutly to be wished.*" My patron, Lord Erskine, had written to his brother in Edinburgh, the Hon. Henry Erskine, strongly recommending me, in consequence of which he sent notice to his Lordship, that he could then give me a situation in the post-office, Edinburgh, of L.80 a-year, if I wished it, and would immediately embrace it. Circumstanced as I then was, and having only a day or two allowed for my departure, I could not possibly accept this offer, which I have had great reason to regret ever since. My situation in London, humble as it was, yet was the primary object;—my first great duty;—"it *must*, it *will* be obeyed;"—"no shuffling there;"—but "accidents will happen in

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the best regulated families." I remember, in Drury, that the unfortunate Mr Reddish had to play *Alonzo*, in the tragedy of that name;—it had been performed but twice. He had not to go on till the beginning of the 4th act, although the principal character, and one which took up little time in preparing for. His dresser, knowing this, and that Reddish, like myself, did not like to be dressed an hour before his time; thinking too, perhaps, that if he was, it damped and cooled his spirit, the man was not much surprised when he was not in the house at the beginning of the play;—but when the 1st act was over, he was alarmed, and, to do his duty, was obliged to go and acquaint the prompter. This soon occasioned a general alarm; when, "not being at his lodgings to be found, they sent three several quests to search him out;" but fruitless all! The second act over, but no *Alonzo* to be found. They now sent out messengers, six times three, all over the neighbourhood, and all to no effect. The third act over, in Drury-Lane Theatre, a new tragedy, called "Alonzo," and no *Alonzo* in the house, nowhere to be found!—What was to be done? It being a new play, only twice performed, no substitute could be procured; and, having proceeded so far in it, they could not propose to change it: to give it up, dismiss the house, and return the money, was a disappointment to the public; a certain loss to the managers and actors, and an injury to the author. In this dilemma, with great persuasion, they prevailed on Mr James Aickin, reluctantly, to read the part. An apology was made,—the audience did not feel reconciled to it: At length, Mr Garrick was under the necessity of appearing himself, and assuring them, on his word, that the fact was, as I have before stated: they still were very turbulent, till a

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gentleman rose up in the pit, and said, "For shame, for shame! pay some respect to Mr Garrick." This was received with applause, and had a very happy effect. They suffered then the play to proceed, but with evident marks of displeasure on Mr Aickin's appearing with the manuscript in his hand, for it was not then printed. This circumstance, trifling as it may seem, was sufficient to disconcert the other actors in a new play, who then, if at any loss, must "have known their cue without a prompter." The very same gentleman alluded to above, probably, desired the house to consider Mr Aickin, and that the task he had kindly undertaken, was a very serious and painful one, and demanded their greatest indulgence,—this address had again a salutary effect; on the first reading of a speech of any consequence, they seized the opportunity of testifying their sense of his situation, and greeted him with a loud and unanimous mark of their approbation. Encouraged now, he read the remainder of the character with encreasing energy; and Mrs Barry's great excellence, notwithstanding this disadvantage, brought the unfortunate catastrophe to a peaceable and happy conclusion. "It now remains, that we find out the cause of this effect." The cause of all this confusion, was simply this:—It being in one of the six weeks of Lent, when on the Wednesdays and Fridays they are not allowed to play, but Oratorios may be performed, poor Reddish had mistaken this Thursday for an Oratorio night; and just at the finish of the tragedy, with the greatest coolness and unconcern, "unconscious of the mischief he had made," was about to walk into the boxes, arm in arm with a lady, intending to hear the last grand chorus of the "Messiah." The box-keeper arrested him in his career; after a little tragedy flouncing and bouncing



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on his part, being convinced of his mistake, he left his *Dulcinea*, and ran round to the stage-door. Mr Garrick, on his explanation, advised him, when the epilogue was over, by all means, to address the audience and clear it up; he pleaded his dishabille,—"Poh," said Garrick, "that will be in your favour; and depend on it, if you neglect this, you'll have a harder gauntlet to run the next night." Reddish felt the force of this: Garrick took him by the hand, and, leading him to the middle of the stage, there left him to "make the best of a bad market." After some marks of their displeasure, the audience accepted his apology, gave him credit for his asseveration, smiled at his mistake,

"Peace was restored, and all was calm again!"

A few years after, he was in such a state of mental derangement, that he could no longer appear upon the stage; he was at length obliged to submit to confinement; yet still, he was acting-mad,—but only mad, "north-north-west." On these favourable occurrences, "when the wind was southerly," his friends seized the time to procure him a benefit, at which he was to play one of his favourite characters—*Posthumus* in "Cymbeline;" he did, and wonderfully well. Two of his best friends, who were with him behind the scenes during the play, were in great pain for him, in apprehension that he would not get through. Incredible that he did, when all the night he strongly entertained the idea that he was playing *Romeo*, saying to his friends, "Do you remember Barry in *Romeo*? he was accounted very great in the garden-scene,—tell me when its over, what you think of *me* in it." "My dear Reddish, it is not *Romeo*,—recollect yourself; you know its *Posthumus* you've got to play." "Oh, ay, *Posthu-*

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*mus*,—ay, ay, you're right, very true." Again, "Do you remember Garrick in the last act, in the tomb-scene? he was reckon'd very great there; 'twas his own writing too; beat Barry there all to nothing: Now, see *me* in it." "My dear friend, be cool, collect yourself, remind yourself that its *Posthumus* you are playing." "Oh, ay, *Posthumus!* yes, yes, very true,—you're right: *Posthumus* now; *Romeo*, the next night,—very true." In this incoherent manner, it is, I say, incredible to think that he acquitted himself so well as to astonish those who knew him, and those who did not, could not perceive the derangement he laboured under: from this, however, it still kept encreasing,—all hopes of his recovery were given up, and in some months after, to "end this strange, eventful history,"—he died in Bedlam. "Alas, poor Yorick!"

As I observed that my situation in Drury engrossed my time, and demanded my first attention, I suppose Lord Erskine thought I should have so little opportunity for writing, that it could be no object to me, and it was therefore soon withheld. He felt satisfied, I imagine, with having procured me a settlement, and though I confess, I flattered myself, that, all things considered, my salary would have been somewhat better, I sat down once more in company with my constant companion, Hope, contented. Lodging now so far from Sloane-street, and unavoidably being so uncertain and irregular in my attendance, I soon had but one pupil to wait on—Miss Yeo, where every allowance was made for me, and where I was granted every indulgence.

On the approach of Christmas, Mr Sheridan took it into his head to have a pantomime for the holidays; no use arguing about the almost impossibility of producing one in so short a time—a pantomime

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there must be, and a pantomime there was. Mr Rich, (or Lunn) when manager of Covent-Garden Theatre, so wonderfully great himself in Harlequin, and so deservedly famous for his Pantomime; in planning, altering, rehearsing one, has been, from first to last, three years before he ventured to present it to the public; but, "procrastination is the thief of time:" And now we live in more enlightened, more expeditious days. I remember one severe winter, when in Drury, and the actors had violent colds, the singers hoarse, the dancers with sprained ancles, Garrick could scarcely get any thing done: seeing near him a performer, who had newly commenced a summer manager, with more pleasantry than chagrin, said to him, "Here, you see what a pretty predicament I am in; with all my numbers, I know not how to get a tragedy, comedy, opera, farce, or even a dance done,—and you, I've heard, with not a tenth part of our people, in three summer months, play all the new pieces that we and the other house can hardly produce all the winter: How the devil do you contrive to manage it?" "Oh, sir," says the other, "we get 'em up there very easily, from night to night, and make nothing of 'em." Thus it was with our new pantomime, called "The Enchanters:" it was thought of, planned, rehearsed and produced in less than a month, and "they made nothing of it." All that could be done in this short time, by performers, painters, machinists, musicians, carpenters and tailors, was done: but there was no time to paint a scene, invent or bring forward any thing new; even the music was taken from the old pantomimes of the "Genii," "Fortunatus," "Queen Mab," the "Elopement," &c. and adapted to the business and "cunning of the scene," as well as they could;—the principal character in this, the

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Clown, was not provided till within a week of its being brought out, and then, what we had done, was all to do over again. As it was known that, from childhood, I had been in the forementioned pantomimes, and every other that had been exhibited in Drury Theatre, for more than twenty years, I had the honour of being pitched upon for "the lean and slipper'd Pantaloon," and being concerned in no less than sixteen scenes in it, had the pleasure of being pushed, shoved, tossed, and tumbled about as much as any Pantaloon could reasonably expect or wish for. On Christmas-eve day, and all Christmas day, we were in the theatre, practising this "enchanting" business from *eleven* in the morning till *four*, and from *six* till *twelve* o'clock at night. As I have said, the theatres were then publicly shut, and not a penny for this extra trouble—not one glass of beer allowed. On these pressing and unpleasant occasions, there always was, in Garrick's time, a comfortable cold collation and refreshments provided; but this old custom, (perhaps from being indiscreetly used by some), had long been dropt. This piece was done every night in the holiday-week, and passed;—every time there was some alterations and additions, for indeed there was great room for improvement. When the noisy boyish week was over, as our audience became more polished and discerning, in spite of all exertions, our pantomime lost even gallery attraction, and received marks of displeasure. After skimming thus the Christmas cream for sixteen successive nights, the famous pantomime at Covent-Garden came out, called "Harlequin and Mother Goose;" and the next night ours was so completely goosed, that it was never attempted afterwards. This, I believe, was foreseen and expected.

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At the latter end of the season, in the middle of June, I had a desire to take a benefit—or, a part of one; that is to say, a quarter of the house; but three partners could not be found, and in *that* case, my share of the charges to the managers, with other expenses, would have been sixty pounds, and I feared to venture more, supposing I had been allowed. I therefore resolved to go upon a safe, though humble plan, of taking tickets, as it is termed, by which I ran no risk, having half what I brought in, be it little or much. The play of the "Clandestine Marriage," on account of the loss of the great original *Lord Ogleby*, Mr King, had not been performed for above eight years, except once, when a worthy man and a good actor attempted the character, but was far from adding to his reputation by it, and never tried it again. The late Mr Watson, the Cheltenham manager, with whom I had played the part, happening to be in London about that time, spoke of me in it very highly to Mr Wroughton, the acting-manager there; so did Mr J. Bannister, who was ever ready to throw in a good-natured word. As this night on which I was to be concerned was what they call a ticket night, and there could be no objection to the play; as I had been known to Mr Wroughton many years, and had every reason to believe he wished to serve me; and indeed, in his department, all persons, where he could with propriety, and "not wronging them he served;"—these circumstances being in my favour, I was allowed to play the part, which was certainly as great an undertaking as to attempt *Cato* or *Coriolanus* after Mr Kemble; more especially too for one like me, not recognized by the public; or, if known at all, obliged to appear in such a paltry line, that it would prejudice and make much more against than for

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me. What would one of the audience think, for instance, on seeing me appear as *Lord Ogleby*, who immediately recollected that the night before I was one of the speechless Forty Thieves; or may be one of the dumb Counsellors, walking in the procession, along with my dresser, in "Tekeli?" Nay, even in one of my great parts there—*Jack Slang*, one of *Tony Lumpkin's* gang, in "She Stoops to Conquer?" Had I been conscious that the whole theatre knew this, I should not have been at all surprised, if, conceiving my attempt an insult, they had all unanimously risen, and left the house. If I possessed no abilities for such an arduous character, (so difficult to hit that many a good actor has failed in it, and many a good one been afraid of attempting,) if this was the case, it certainly was insulting their understanding and respectability; on the other hand, if I *could* play the part in a style far above mediocrity, my situation there was cruelly degrading. Considering the business they allotted me, I had no reason to be dissatisfied with my salary, I confess, as a great part of it might as well have been done by a supernumerary at a shilling a night; my dresser had that, who was, like myself, a walking Counsellor in "Tekeli." But, as I have said, the play was done, and the characters cast, as we call it, in the following manner:—

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE, LONDON.
*Thursday, June the 14th,* 1806.
THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.
*Lord Ogleby,* Mr EVERARD.
*Sir John Melville,* Mr BARRYMORE.
*Sterling,* Mr DOWTON.
*Lovewell,* Mr BARTON—*Canton,* Mr WEWITZER.
*Brush,* Mr R. PALMER.

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*Mrs Heidelberg*, Miss POPE.
*Miss Sterling*, Mrs HARLOWE.
*Betty*, Miss MELLON.
*Chambermaid*, Mrs SCOTT.
*Miss Fanny Sterling*, Mrs H. SIDDONS.

I thought myself very fortunate that the play was cast in this manner;—it made me easier, and was more agreeable to me than I might have been, perhaps, with comedians to whom I was a total stranger; here, to use one of their own expressions, "I had got among my old friends;" so indeed I had. Miss Pope, like myself, was brought up from infancy under Garrick, and continued there till within these very few years, she retired, after being in the same theatre near sixty, one of its greatest ornaments, and her character and conduct off the stage, all that time unimpeachable. Mr R. Palmer too and I were children there together; in his younger days, much more fortunate than myself, his eldest brother Mr John Palmer was a father to him, and with merit of his own, backed by his interest, secured to him a respectable situation there all his life. Mr Barrymore, on the morning of our rehearsing this, showed me a bill of the "Clandestine Marriage," in which my name was in for *Lord Ogleby* for his benefit, twenty-seven years before. Mr Wewitzer I had been known to a long time, and some others. These performers, and indeed those whom I had not the happiness to be known to, kindly gave me their best support, and appeared to be even anxious for my success.

Allow me to observe, to those not well acquainted with theatricals, what I mean by their supporting me; I mean, that they did not merely walk on and off at their right sides, P. S. and O. P.; stand

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just in their proper places, and coolly speak the words;—no, they "played up to me." A gamester may conceal his play—a partner may play booty—a jockey may lose when he could win, getting more by it, and out-jockey his master; so may an actor hide *his* play, and all this kind of paltry work, done so neatly, so judiciously, that scarcely any but an actor, a jockey, or a gamester can discover the villainy:—They are "jugglers alike;" but the jockeys and gamesters of every description, practice and carry on *their* deceptions with a view of *gain;* and often make a fortune, when, strictly speaking, instead of *rising* by it in the world, they deserved to make a *drop*. The actor who designedly hides *his* play, and intentionally endeavours, by so doing, to "throw cold water" on a performer, does not do so with any lucrative idea, with any prospect of gain, but from the worst and meanest motives that the breast can harbour—jealousy, envy. *Catesby*, conscious that the news of *Buckingham* being in his power would be highly gratifying to *Richard*, comes in hastily, saying,

"My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken."

In the last scene, when *Richard* roars out,

"A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!"

and his other colleague in villainy, (*Ratcliffe*,) comes on, and says,

"This way, my lord;—below yon thicket stands a swift horse," &c.

If these lines, I say, instead of being delivered with warmth, glee, spirit, and all the rapidity that speech can give, should be uttered in a cold, slow, unimpassioned manner, it would be enough to damp and knock up the first actor on the stage. I am very

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sensible that if a comedian happens to read these pages, he may say,

"There needs no ghost come from the grave to tell us this."

But I write these remarks, chiefly for the perusal and information of those who are unacquainted with dramatic manœuvres, and wishing that some who *are* in that line, will never descend to these unmanly arts. I must repeat that I was well supported, and in the most friendly manner. The audience was friendly too; I was received throughout with the highest marks of approbation and applause, and on the conclusion, complimented and congratulated by proprietors and performers.

In a week after, the theatre closed, and I had not been able to procure a summer engagement; I wished to have gone to Brighton; but they did not open for a month, after which, I could not have staid there above a month before my return to town, and our journey there and back, my salary for that time would only have paid the expense of. I was obliged to stay in London six weeks unemployed, and then for about six more went down to Windsor, being engaged for the time by Mr Mudie. Having previously left my address with the prompter, when I saw the advertisement for Drury-Lane to open on the Saturday, I was surprised that, as is customary, he had sent me no intimation of it; but as there was no other person in the company belonging to Drury, and so small the distance, I reconciled it to myself the best way I could; and perceiving I was not wanted the first night, I ventured to stay in Windsor the Monday night, and got into London on Tuesday, their second play-day;—I was not wanted then, nor on their third night, the Thursday. Being received in the theatre as usual, my surprise and alarm at not hearing from the prompter, when at Windsor, subsi-

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ded; but I soon found I had too much cause for my apprehension, when, on the Saturday morning, I went up to the office, and to my astonishment, the treasurer told me that "my name was not in his list, and there was no salary for me." I applied to Mr Sheridan, Mr Justice Graham, the president of the board of management, Mr Wroughton, Mr Powell, the prompter; no one had erased my name —no one knew any thing about it, nor could give me any explanation.

In Garrick's time, (and, I believe, even now to this day,) such performers who did not rank so high as to have the honour of being for a certain term under *articles* to the managers, and such as they did not think proper to retain, had, towards the end of their season, due notice from the prompter to this effect:—"Sir, I am ordered to inform you, that the managers have no further occasion for your services. Yours, &c." I remember a person, (among the very few in *those days,*) whom Garrick had told the prompter to send *that* notice to, but he had forgot to do it at the usual time. On the day of the company's meeting the next season just previous to their opening, Garrick was surprised to see this performer walking about there, as if no such circumstance had happened, and calling him, said, "Pray, Mr Booth, did not you receive notice from the prompter, that we had no further occasion for you?"—"Oh, yes—yes, sir, I did—but not at the proper time—only about a month ago, and that was no time to provide myself in; I could not think of being discharged now." The easy simplicity of this reply made Garrick smile, and,—"Well, well," says he, "if you can't think of it, why—you must stay, that's all I know." He accordingly did all the winter; but, as formerly, was very unfortunate

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in the business; yet he was not negligent and inattentive; he was even frequently at the rehearsals an hour or more before his time; yet, by some strange fatality, and sometimes, I fear, by the designed jokes of some wags, he was almost ever out of the way when he was wanted. At night, too, he was generally equally unlucky and blundering. This season was half over before they ventured to trust him with only half a line in the tragedy of "Cymbeline." *Imogen*, (then Miss Young,) disguised as a man, is discovered on the stage, having swooned on a bank; when the Roman Ambassador enters with his Officers, this gentlemen had only to say,—"He is alive, my lord."—The Ambassador, surprised at *Imogen's* situation, and in doubt whether alive or dead, says,—"Let us see the *boy's* face."—When my unfortunate hero, going to the bank, and taking hold of *Imogen's* hand, with great energy, exclaimed,—"*She* is alive, my lord."—At this evident blunder, some laughed, some hissed, and so disconcerted *Imogen* and the poor Ambassador, (Bransby,) and distressed the whole scene, that Garrick was determined he should have his discharge time enough now, and it was accordingly sent him the next morning; four months before the end of the season.

The cause of my cruel disappointment, after waiting at the theatre six weeks without any salary, I could not possibly discover. At length, I was informed that the treasurer had entered all the salaries and expenses for the winter, and it would create an infinite deal of trouble and confusion to alter his books. Let me think of this as I would, I found that expostulation or entreaties were of no avail, and was obliged to submit. I shall, however, always think that I am *right* in my conjecture as to the person who did me this premeditated, serious in-

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jury; if I am wrong, why, heaven forgive me. Having no idea, no *right* to imagine but that my situation *there* would be at least *secure*, if not *bettered*, I lost six weeks on *that* account; for, if there was a determination to discharge me—if they had sent me proper notice of it at the *end* of their season, I could immediately have had a good summer engagement where I probably too should have had a good benefit. This I lost, and then six weeks more at the *beginning* of their season, and after all this, lost my *situation*.—"Loss upon loss."—But for the above circumstances I should not have regretted *that* loss, for I had fully resolved to give it up, should I have, the ensuing winter, no prospect of better business to do, and of course, a better income; for, as to regard of the *business* that I did, had every performer in the theatre been of the *first class*, in their different styles of acting, in what *they* now call the "Old School," had each, and every one been a Garrick, Mossop, Macklin, Quin, Barry, Smith, O'Brien, Holland, Powell, Palmer, Lewis, Woodward, Shuter, Yates, King, Weston, Edwin, Parsons,—I say, even if this had been the case, my business there could not have been more humiliating and degrading, being allotted such as no *actor* should have been *thrust on for*. I fear to say any thing in praise of myself, but it may be thought by *some*, arrogant in me, to style myself an *actor*; but, if I am not one, I know that I am (and have been, to my sorrow,) nothing else; and again, if I am *not* one,

> "Plague of my bringing up!
> Who taught the boy to speak?"—A Garrick.

When the celebrated Cibber, Booth, Wilkes, Ryan, Pinkethman, Mills, and others were managers and most capital performers, no doubt,—Dogget



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likewise, proprietor, and a most excellent performer by all accounts, and who bequeathed a capital sum, with the "Coat and Badge" to be rowed for on the Thames, on the first of August, annually;—these were in *my* days, of the "Old School." When Garrick appeared, Quin said,—"If he was right, *they* had all been wrong." When his ordeal was passed, and his fame established, *his* was then called the "New School." Now again,

> "Severe their task, who, in this critic age,
> Dare give opinions of the new-trod stage."

This task, it is true, I have brought upon myself, severe as it is to myself,—yet I will be bold to say, that if any critic will consider only a few of the names *before* Garrick's *time*, and *in* his time, if they can produce such a list of eminent actors, not to mention many others of great repute, (beside ladies,) of the *present* day, why I will "sit down contented with my lot." As I have spoken of the ladies, though out of my sphere, I will return to the "Old School," and say that I have heard and read much in praise of the celebrated actresses, Mrs Oldfield, Mrs Porter, and many others. I remember to have played the childish parts of the *Page* in Otway's "Orphan;" the *Duke of York*, and *Prince Edward*, in "Richard the Third;" *Prince Arthur*, and *Prince Henry*, in "King John;" *Prince Clarence*, in "Second Part of King Henry Fourth," &c. with the much admired Mrs Cibber, Mrs Pritchard, Mrs Yates, Mrs Barry, a Garrick and a Sheridan; yet these are now called, (sometimes perhaps rather contemptuously,) of Garrick's "Old School;" if so, it was at any rate, the "School of Nature;" and I wish she would condescend to take some of our young actors by the hand, and give them a lesson there.

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Respecting my business I have said enough, and, as in many other cases, I fear too much. Regarding my income, already specified, I shall only say, that a little salary of twenty-five shillings, or even a guinea a-week, in a provincial theatre, with the chance of four or five benefits in the year, with no *play-house pay*, with no *vacation*, and possessing the line of business I had till then in every theatre been accustomed to, would certainly have been more congenial to my feelings, and much more beneficial.

Here I must, however, acknowledge, that the proprietors made me a compliment from the treasury, in consideration of the circumstance and for my loss of time, (though very inadequate to my loss); in addition to which I received another in the kindest manner from Mr Dowton, generously collected by and from him, Mr Wroughton, Mr Bannister, Mr Wewitzer, Mr Palmer, Mr Barrymore, and others;—Miss Mellon, too, (perhaps I should not mention her name, as I was desired not to do so, but I can't help it,) in the most polite manner sent me five pounds; and now, not wishing to be seen near Drury, wherein I flattered myself with the vain hope of being settled for the short remainder of my lease of life; not liking to be looked on like "the wounded deer, who from the hunter's aim had *ta'en a hurt*;" not caring any one to see "the big round drops fall down," I determined to get off as soon as possible. Accordingly, I embraced the first engagement, and went off in a day or two to my former Kidderminster manager, then playing at Horncastle, in Lincolnshire, 142 miles from London, and safely arrived there the beginning of December.

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Having now unwillingly left London, Old and New Drury with a heavy heart; to the then treasurer of the navy, or the treasurer of Drury, bearing no ill-will,—no pique,—my wife and I were safely and intentionally landed, where many a married man has unwittingly been before me—at Horncastle!—I had never till then seen Lincolnshire;—I liked it much; the people free, cheerful, hospitable;—lodgings and provisions of all kinds plentiful and cheap;—a single man lodged and boarded there, beyond what I call barely comfortably, for eight shillings per week. We continued there nearly three months; had good business; every market day, Saturday, pretty sure of a full house, which, in most towns, is quite the contrary;—all, too, had good benefits, with one exception, on account of weather. Reluctantly I left it, with "an ill-divining soul," to go to Wragby, a very small town, ten miles off. The winter now was very severe—the snow deep—the face of things quite changed:—our business bad from the first fell, off to worse and worse;—no salaries could be paid—the company broke up; and each one, according to his means and inclination, shifted for himself;—the manager and all the corps had left the place "for me to bustle in." A gentleman there, however, one of the faculty, kindly bustled for me, and enabled me to quit the town clear as I entered it, and to proceed, as I intended, ten miles further only, to Lincoln. I went directly to the post-office, where I found a letter from my brother in London, whom I had wrote to from Wragby, with a two-pound note in it, which was highly acceptable. It emboldened me to give out my readings for one night, which but for that, I should not, perhaps, have ven-

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tured, being a total stranger. Had I given it a fair chance, I doubt not, 'twou'd have proved much better, but I feared to incur expenses. It fully answered my expectations, and next day I set off on my way to Stamford. On my arrival in Stamford, I found the company there under the management of Messrs Manly and Robertson. I thought this circumstance, and being fair week too, would make against my little proposed plan, but it proved otherwise. When I had, with some difficulty, procured a lodging, I sent a line to them;—they obligingly came to me that night when all was over at the theatre, told me the company was full, but that if I chose to accept of a guinea per week for the remainder of their season—a short month—I might. I gladly closed with this offer. I had been known to Mr Manly some years, and been with him in the Gosport, Weymouth, and Plymouth-dock companies; Mr Robertson I was a stranger to. Except the "Country-Boys," which he was happy in, and which, "even in my boyish days," I never attempted, I soon found that he was very much in my way; but as he was not, like most managers, very ambitious of playing, keeping that line to himself, and giving, as he could, an excellent comic song between the acts, would, I don't doubt, have fully contented him, and I think he would willingly have resigned many of his characters to me, and given me a situation, but his partner, I believe, did not approve of it. However, I played one of his parts the next night, *Sharp*, the Lying Valet;—they likewise played the farce of the "Lyar," as many persons remembered me in a favourite part, *Papillion*. When they could not give me a character to play without encroach-



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ing on the dramatic laws, by taking it from an actor in possession of it, and which, by hurting his feelings,—" Heaven forbid my thoughts should rob him of,"—when this was the case, I gave a recitation or danced; for, as it was clearly evident that they had no occasion for me, and that my temporary engagement was merely an act of kindness on their part, I felt it my duty to employ myself as much and as well as I could.

Mrs Gosley here, the wife of a dancing-master, was the daughter of Mr Whitley, then deceased, manager and proprietor of this theatre and several others, which he had bequeathed to her, with great part, if not all, of the rest of his property. Having been, in her father's time, in both his companies, on my application, with the consent of Mr Gosley and the managers, I was allowed the Stamford theatre, gratis, for my Recitations.

The company had taken no benefits here, it not being their proper season, as they termed it. They went there, perhaps, chiefly on account of the fair-week, as they do for the assizes or races; but they had been there, I think, about two months; this was certainly against me. When the town had so recently seen a respectable and full company before them, what encouragement could I expect from my humble *solus* attempt? I apologized for this in my bills, by observing, that the public might think it arrogant in me to expect the usual prices of the theatre, as when all the performers were there. I had, therefore, taken the liberty to reduce the admittance to the boxes, 2s. the pit, to 1s. and the gallery, only 6d.; this, I believe, was greatly in my favour. My having performed in the theatre for a month was not against, but brought me to the remembrance of some friends who had been partial to

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me. The company finished, judiciously, on the Saturday night previous to the Passion-week. No plays in London are suffered in that week, nor in York, Bath, Norwich, Litchfield, Lincoln—in fine, no city where there is a bishoprick; no town of any consequence in England, in this particular week, nor at such other times and certain days, will they allow a theatre to be opened;—in a small village there, with a small party, in a small barn, when the magistrate has thought them too small to meddle with, has allowed them to go on, in order to procure a small bit of bread; yet that magistrate might say, according to Dr Young,

"But this is mercy,—this is my indulgence."

It certainly was so. This is not the case, in foreign countries. In Paris, they have at least sixteen theatres, and all full, of a Sunday night. In Spain, Italy, Germany, it is the same; they observe the Sabbath with the greatest strictness and devotion, till a certain time, till the beginning of the evening, when, as they feel conscious to have discharged their spiritual duty, they think themselves at free liberty to indulge in temporal gratifications, and accordingly, every theatre, hotel, tavern, is full of conviviality on the Sunday evening. In Scotland, Passion-week is scarcely thought of, or known. In Edinburgh, they play every night in that week, and even on Good-Friday: Yet no people, more than they, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Montrose, Perth, and indeed throughout the whole kingdom, can pay a greater respect or attention to the church, or kirk, and every moral and religious duty. This deviation from the church and customs of England, has its foundation in the alteration and mode of religion and habit, and—"Whatever is, is right." As I have never been in Paris,

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Italy, Spain, or Germany, I have never seen a play on a Sunday night, although in my time, I have frequently been obliged to be all that day at the rehearsal of one. I shall never see one performed in London on a Sunday night, nor do I wish it: yet, if the theatres then were allowed to open, if they might play "Cato," "Coriolanus," "George Barnwell," "The Gamester," or Oratorios at moderate prices; in short, if any public places were permitted to offer some inoffensive, rational amusement, where the unthinking youths of London might repair to, when, for want of an asylum and one night's relaxation, they fall into bad company, the foundation-stone of all evil, I am firmly persuaded that it would save many from a premature, ignominious death. To return to my own immediate business; I had fixed my night for the Easter-Monday, and so had the whole Passion-week, to give notice of, and prepare for it. On the Tuesday, I gave away, judiciously as I could, about 200 bills—rested at home on Wednesday—delivered 800 more on the Thursday—kept house on the Good-Friday; on Saturday went with a man to deliver 400 bills more, and had 50 posted up in the most public and usual places:—had the boxes, pit and gallery cleaned out, stage washed, lights fixed, such scenery as I wanted, "all furnished,"—all prepared, with a good band of musicians. On the Monday, as I always wished, I had nothing to do but the night's business, and that was quite sufficient. Every thing being in the order I desired, I went to the theatre before six o'clock, having to begin at seven, but with a heavy mind; I had taken but four shillings for tickets: in my way, I called at the printer's—he had not sold one—only five places taken in the boxes. I staid behind the scenes till within a few minutes of seven;

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" The charge was prepared, the musicians were met,
The benches all ranged,—a terrible show."

Indeed it was to me, for there was at that time only empty benches, and no sign of any one coming near them. At length, at such a dreary prospect, horribly chagrined, depressed, despairing, I said,

" Let the sky go to rack, and miscarry."

Wrapped myself up in my great or top-coat, and slipt over the way to the George-Inn: I told my well-behaved friend the hostess my fears and uneasiness, and asked for a glass of porter; she persuaded me to take something stronger—told me she knew of many who were going, that they would all go at once. I soon saw a number pouring in—she made me take another glass; I then went off in good spirits, and in ten minutes began my performance to a very respectable audience. I might add too a very numerous one, for so it truly was; but then 'tis certain that the pit and gallery was only at half price, and the boxes but little more, so that there was an appearance of a sixty pound house, when my receipt was but little more than thirty; yet that was a great deal "more than my most knowing hopes presaged." I had every reason to be highly satisfied with my account, and still more so, because the audience were perfectly satisfied. I had no less than " fourteen serious and humorous recitations to deliver, with seven comic songs, to dance a sailor's hornpipe, and what I called, my Medley Hornpipe:" the company not only patiently sat four hours, " to hear and see the matter," but by the applause they kindly and warmly bestowed throughout the whole, left the theatre surprisingly pleased, in terms of the highest approbation.

From Stamford, I went to Leicester, being informed that Mr M'Cready's company was there;

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I found it so, but as usual no situation for me. Having been there some years before, and many respectable town's-persons still remembering me, I ventured to give out a night; it turned out as well as I could suppose. I then proceeded to Loughborough and Burton-upon-Trent; trying the same in each town one night, with tolerable success, and then arrived safe in Derby. Here, as I expected, I found Mr Manly and Mr Robertson's company, and, as I also again expected, no room for me. I was here very ill myself, and my wife a great deal worse—her dropsical complaint afflicted her most severely and alarmingly. Many years before, Dr Salt at Litchfield had been a great friend to me; here, there was a gentleman who well remembered me there, then a pupil of his—Mr Surgeon Fowler; but for this circumstance, but for his wonderful kindness, his constant attendance, his supplying us likewise with necessary, and I am sure, expensive medicines, neither of us could ever have come out of Derby. When I got better, I had a very genteel company one night in the Assembly Room. I was told that Ashby-de-la-Zouch and its neighbourhood were very spirited and well-disposed, to encourage an attempt of the kind; and my wife being too indisposed to journey, I adopted the advice and went; my success there far exceeded my warmest expectations. I performed, if I may term it so, three nights to a good company; in addition to which, I had the compliment of a guinea each from Lord Tamworth, another nobleman, and Squire Beaumont, in the vicinity; the last mentioned gentleman indulged me with the sight of an elegant cup, or goblet tip'd with silver, of the real mulberry tree, no doubt planted by Shakespeare, and given by Garrick to that worthy man and excellent actor, Thomas King, Esq. with a silver plate,

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on which were a few lines expressive of Garrick's acknowledgment of the high esteem in which he had held him for a number of years, for his attention, punctuality, abilities, and worth. On my return to Derby, I had another night; after which, I played a part in the "Exile," and danced for Mr Manly's benefit, and then, my wife being much better, ventured to journey on to Nottingham. As I thought the Buxton theatre would soon open, it was well I did not wish to continue long there; after a week, I accordingly gave out a night, which was not badly attended, but, from my being unacquainted with the constitution of the people, "God save the King," and "British Loyalty," displeased the loyal inhabitants, and I gladly left it for Buxton. On my arrival there, I was greatly disappointed to find that the theatre would not open for above a month, and my attempting any matter by myself, was not likely to answer, for indeed there was scarcely any visitants in the place; wishing to be doing something, I went off to Huddersfield in Yorkshire. Having in my way stopped at Barnsley; there I found a company under the direction of Mr John Staunton—as an actor and assistant prompter he engaged me, though they were then half through their benefits, but only at the very moderate salary of fifteen shillings a-week: In less than a month we finished—I could not get a benefit; I was offered eighteen shillings to go with him to Lancaster, and a guinea for my expences, but what was to become of my poor wife? She was all this time ill at Nottingham: The manager plainly and bluntly told me he should not then, nor on my arrival in Lancaster, if I went, would he assist me with a guinea to enable me to send for my wife. I was therefore obliged to give her up, or else my offered engagement; for at that time, being already at such

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a distance, I am persuaded that if I had gone fifty miles further from her, we should never have met again. When the scenic king and corps had all decamped, I procured an elegant room in the George Inn, gratis, had some bills printed, and a genteel and sufficiently numerous company. Thoroughly satisfied with this, and the treatment I received from a generous, hospitable set of people, I gratefully left it, and in three days got to Buxton, where, in three weeks my wife arrived in tolerable health, which in a short time, by the benefit of the waters, was fully established.

Some of the Huddersfield company having joined the Buxton, took care now to inform the manager, (who had great occasion for me,) that Staunton gave me but fifteen shillings per week, and he accordingly would allow no more: I was reduced to accept it on my wife's account, to bring her to me. In a short time my little salary was raised, on my undertaking the prompter's task. We had but very indifferent business for the greater part of the summer; "they manage these things better in France." So they used to do in Buxton, formerly; when I was here many years ago, they began always at five o'clock, and finished at nine; when all the hotel bells rang for supper, it was our "cue" to leave off: The visitants got to rest in time, and they nor the doctor were sorry for being at the play the night before. At this period, as we commonly did not begin till after seven o'clock, it was usually eleven before we concluded. The next morning the physician was offended with his patient, the patient was angry with himself for being up so late, and the indisposed visitant did not therefore visit us again. Another cause, I apprehend, for our bad business was, that I think the plays and performances were not calculated for "the



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meridian of Buxton." We never had, or expected gallery-people here. Such plays as "Hamlet," "Richard," "Romeo," "Othello," "Alexander," &c., without a performer capable of playing these characters, or, strictly speaking, more than an octave below them; without proper dresses, properties, scenery, were these fit to attempt before a polite audience? The first glance of the bill made them resolve not to come, or if they did, to pass an idle time, they came

"To laugh the sprightly hours away."

And I assure you that our tragedies here, as in some other places, were more lively to a genteel company than our comedies, except, indeed, when we had, as at Buxton this summer, some of our London stars to shine upon us, as Mr Bannister, Mr Emery, and Miss Duncan, that was then. When that was not the case, light comedies, such as the "Wonder," "Suspicious Husband," "She Stoops to Conquer," "Busy Body," with a short laughable farce or little musical after-piece, would have better pleased a respectable assemblage, been more profitable to the manager, and, I am certain, much more to the credit of the company. The benefits turned out very badly; mine was not till the last day of October; the visitants almost, of course, gone. I rather lost than gained by it. I was, however, from circumstances, persuaded to go with them to Bolton in Lancashire. This was a very different place from Buxton. This theatre was built and calculated for the gallery people, and, accordingly, it was very large. We frequently began a play to ten shillings and have had ten pounds in the shilling-gallery at half-price. Here their tragedies succeeded better than the best written politest comedies;



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they were "caviar to the multitude;" bombast, fustian, and pomposity in ragged shapes would pass. Having again got nothing by a benefit, I engaged to go to Oldham, about six miles from here, the other side of Manchester, with Mr Riley, author of his life, in three volumes, called the "Itinerant." He had again newly started a company. He was, I found, a well-behaved man; Mrs Riley a polite sensible woman; but, like too many, gave too much ear to tale-bearers; and as most of the company soon discovered their foible, and how greedily they swallowed every dirty, paltry, tittle-tattling tale, that with very little truth and a deal of ingenuity, their slander could invent, and as I was almost the only one who never descended to enter their malicious cabals, they had every opportunity to prejudice them against me. The theatre here was well attended, and the stage business well conducted. Mr Elliston, who was performing for a few nights at Manchester, came and played here two or three evenings, and once with Mrs Jordan in the "Soldier's Daughter," when the house was full at double prices, and she declined accepting a shilling for her trouble. Mr Riley having now engaged the Theatre-Royal, Chester, for the assize time and a week or two after, I went with him, where, when we finished, as he gave up management, we parted. I should feel myself very unthinking if I took leave thus of Chester without acknowledging the kind patronage that I afterwards received there at two nights' performance, and gratefully owning the great debt I owe in particular to Captain Henderson for the many obligations his goodness conferred upon me; the kindness too of Mr Poole, bookseller, and others, I shall always entertain a high and proper sense of. With a warm remembrance of their favours, I set

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off a few miles to Knutsford; here I performed in one lady's and two gentlemens' boarding-schools, and I experienced also from the Rev. Mr Mitchell and the Rev. Mr Harry Gray (although averse to theatrical matters) great humanity and generosity. From hence I went to Liverpool, well knowing that the company was there, Messrs Lewis and Knight the managers. I was not at all baulked to find they were full; and having, while at Chester, received the offer of an engagement from part of the Buxton corps to join them at Warrington, it being an easy journey, and suiting well my plan and convenience, I went. I understood there had now been two managers here, and that by some mistake, or perhaps design, the old Buxton manager's name had been omitted in the licence, and he was fairly, or foully thrown out. When he was gone, many of the town, who had heard his story, although "he was no orator as Brutus was," yet leaned to his side and thought him unjustly treated; perhaps they felt the more for him too as he had a very large and young family, and the other none. Be this as it may, the resident manager's estimation and profit were so hurt by it, that he soon after broke up the scheme, though he shortly renewed it. As only two or three benefits succeeded, and no more likely to do, I did not take any, though I wanted one bad enough. I went to Runcorn, a place much frequented in summer by many genteel people. I recited to some of them at the principal hotel and in the Castle four or five times with good success. On my return to Warrington I was wonderfully and most agreeably surprised at an unsolicited, unlooked-for, unthought-of present my wife gave me, which she received in the kindest and most handsome manner from Colonel Blackburn, Mr, Mrs, and the Misses Blackburn,

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Colonel Patten, and other ladies and gentlemen, by their means, amounting to nearly twelve pounds; and this of their own thought, their own humane good-will, and not in twelve weeks, not in dribblets, not by piece-meal, but all at once.

"Oh, when I forget the vast, vast debt I owe to thee and others,
Then let me be driven from the commerce of mankind,
To wander among brutes; to be the scorn of earth,
And curse of heaven!"

The next day, I waited on these ladies and gentlemen, as I thought myself in gratitude and duty bound, to return my poor, but heartfelt acknowledgments; the day after, with my wife, I went by water, very pleasantly, to Manchester. Here was Sir Sidney Smith, but as he had only time to stop a day or two, whether he had not leisure to attend to my letter, giving an explanation of his patronizing me at Bath, with the disappointment of my expectations on that head, I know not; but being invited to a public dinner with the magistrates, and most of the other gentlemen, he condescended to mention me, and I had the patronage of the Borough-Reeve, the principal magistrate, for a performance, and many friends, in consequence of his obliging recommendation.

I then went again to Buxton, it being just opened; the season and our business went on as usual; my being there before was of no effect in respect to my benefit, it coming on so late, (October 29th) and although it was patronized by Lady Saville, I was by it nearly three pounds a loser; the night before, Mr Hill, from the Bath and Covent-Garden theatres, had not *two* in the house for his benefit and his wife's, though deservedly favourites; and the same week we played "Alexander the Great,"

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and " Three-fingered Jack," to less than four-and-twenty shillings!

The beginning of November, the company went to Leek, in Staffordshire. As it was now such a time of year, and only 12 miles off, I could not but continue with them. Here I found lodgings very scarce and difficult to be got; provisions of all kinds, and especially vegetables, very dear. I could soon account for vegetables being so dear, when I found there were above an hundred French prisoners in Leek; and it was as difficult for me on a market day to get a leek, or a head of celery, as it was sometimes to get my salary. The Frenchmen here were, however, half the support of our theatre, most of them being officers; but before the conclusion of the season, we felt the loss of them, three or four, or more, and gentlemen of some consequence, having contrived to make their escape; they were pursued to no purpose; they left their trunks, and most of their articles, except the most necessary one, in their quarters, and coming out at seven o'clock, as usual, under pretence of seeing the play, there was no suspicion caused, and they had, till that was over, at least full four hours the start, or perhaps not till the next morning their escape was discovered; from that time they were more narrowly watched, and durst not be seen out of their lodgings after six o'clock.

About this time, the Rev. Mr Pow, his eldest son the captain, who paid these French prisoners every Saturday a stipulated sum from government, for which, by poundage, he received more than ten pounds a-week;—Mrs P. having seen me perhaps at Leek dance, like a fool, for nothing, as I generally have done, this reverend gentleman's lady (for fear I should be mistaken, I mean his wife, for



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" we that are poor should be cautious,") sent for me, wishing to attend a daughter of her's twice a-week. I was told by a friend in Leek, that notwithstanding their great estate and large fortune, that she would, to use his own expression, " screw me down to the last penny :" indeed, I found it so. The family lived at an elegant seat, full five miles distant from Leek. The last mile up to their house was one mile off the turnpike road, and so very bad, that in January it was impassable for a foot-passenger; flattering myself that it might lead to something better, I at last consented to go there twice a-week for ten shillings. I had to leave Leek at ten o'clock, to be there by twelve; dripping wet, or covered with snow, of course I had to make some change, before I could attend a young lady in the capacity of a dancing-master. I then was ushered into a large cold room to this lady and her governess, for more than two hours—had to change again for my return, and no kind of refreshment ordered me, unless the housekeeper, more hospitable, gave me some. I was under the necessity, too, on these occasions, to entreat the manager to excuse me from the rehearsals. I had appointed the days to attend there, of course, of our non-play days in Leek; but one night, by chance, it happened otherwise. I went there, but I had *Sir Peter Teazle* to play that evening; I could not possibly go out of the house the same way that I came in; compelled, I went nearly two miles round, almost in darkness, and with a great exertion, just got in time for my part in the play. When my benefit came, to this generous lady I wrote off, flattering myself that she would then do something; but she sent me word that her horses were lame, and some other lame excuse, but never a shilling with it, so then she re-

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ceived a line from me that *I* was lame, and could not "dance attendance" any more there.

As I predicted, however, from the first, my attending this family caused many others in the town to wish me to have *their* children. About this time, too, in consequence of a gentleman's death, I was offered, not only the Assembly Room for teaching dancing, but an excellent grammar school. As I found that *one* would not interfere with the *other*, I accepted and engaged for both, relinquished the theatre, and once more thought that I should be comfortably and respectably settled; but oh, vain hope! 'twas not to be; like the first-born, (though without a mark set on me,) I am doom'd to be "a wanderer on the face of the earth." I gave out printed cards for my dancing-school, terms, as I thought, very moderate, only *five shillings* entrance. *That* was objected to, on the ground that a teacher of dancing had been there about two years before, whom I suppose, as the common saying is, "cut a flash and a dash;" his entrance money was half a guinea each; and when he had collected about eighty, he never gave them one lesson, and they never saw him after. On this intelligence I dropt my entrance money, and issued out *new* cards; then my *terms* were too high. I delivered out fresh proposals, with *easier* terms, but to be paid *monthly: that* would not do; they would only agree to pay *quarterly*. The gentleman, too, who had left my intended grammar school, had entered into partnership with the widow of the deceased at the other seminary, and there was, in fine, no prospect of my success, or receiving any encouragement from either, unless I could support a respectable appearance as a teacher or schoolmaster; a lighter, (or less sombre appearance,) as a dancing-master, "a kind of half and half compa-

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rison," and, at the same time, live upon nothing for a quarter of a year. Could I have done this, I think that it might ultimately have answered my long longing wish,—the being settled; but when I had a brother, who for many years had it in his power to do so,—when his bare word, without running any risk,—when he who should have been my *first friend* to have settled me in this *earth*, could, and would not, I give up the delusive hope, and am confident that my *last enemy* will.

I was then compelled to resign, as I now do, the very thought, and quitting Leek, I even left the theatre, ten years ago, and have not trode a stage since, but twice in Edinburgh, where I have been two years, where I now write this, and now commence my wandering career.

From Leek I went to Macclesfield; Staunton's company was there; yet still, in spite of calumny, I found some friends there. From thence I went to Knutsford; had my friends again; then to Warrington, and found my patrons there again. I went only about a mile from thence, and gave my recitations in the Rev. Mr Boardman's, and then in the Rev. Mr Lloyd's schools. I feel myself greatly indebted to their goodness; I needs must say, particularly to Mr and Mrs Boardman, who had previously invited, on that occasion, several ladies and gentlemen to tea and supper, whose politeness and generosity, in addition to theirs, I trust I shall always remember. In the interim, I went again to Runcorn, and, encouraged by their kindness, performed three times; then returned to Warrington, had a public night, well attended, and from thence went off to Buxton.

As my salary there was insufficient to pay for lodgings, and support myself and wife, and as I had to my sorrow experienced, that I ran a greater chance

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of losing than gaining any thing by what we call a benefit, I went, pre-determined, to try my fortune singly; my bold speculation answered wonderfully well; I gave my recitations, not only once, but twice, and in some places three times; at the St Ann's Hotel, the Great Hotel, the Centre Hotel, the George Inn, the Eagle Inn, &c., and in some respectable lodging-houses, to very genteel companies. There was no expense on my part attending this; no room, music, lights, bills, attendance, to pay for; no trouble, but writing a line to the president. So far from my having trouble, I have been sent for at eight o'clock, and past, to my lodging, when I was thinking of nothing else than composing myself for rest, and recited for above two hours. One evening, as I may call it, for they commonly sup at an early hour, I was sent for by the late Dean of St Asaph, and about twenty other gentlemen, to one of the principal hotels; they all appeared to be clerical; the first recitation they asked me to give was from "Cato;" I said that it was a character I had never presumed to attempt, but as I had often read the speech of,

"It must be so;—Plato, thou reason'st well,"

I would *endeavour* to deliver it; after which, recitations from Milton, Pope, Thomson, Rowe, Shakespeare, &c. They appeared to be well satisfied, and so was I.

At the Great Hotel, the next evening, the scene was changed. I had none of this; it was all comedy. But again, *they* were well satisfied, and so was *I*. The next day, after their dinner, I made another entrance; I did very little, but had a great compliment. Count General Woronzow, the Russian ambassador, was present, who, before he went off next morning, left me two pounds. The Bux-

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ton company was playing here all this time, that made my success in these attempts not only more profitable than an engagement with them, but more gratifying. I then went to Stockport; had the Assembly-Room there two nights, for which I paid thirty shillings, which, with other expenses, left me little emolument.

Then I got to Stone, in Staffordshire, in the depth of a hard winter, and supported myself and wife as well as I could, by occasionally writing for two gentlemen, attornies. I proceeded to Stafford, and, with some difficulty, procured the favour of the elegant Town-Hall; but whether from the height, or hollowness of the large pillars, I know not, but, speak as I would, my voice was drowned in *echo*; and of course, I could give but little satisfaction to the audience, and myself less. At this time, too, Mr Sheridan was here, upon his election-business; I knew he was truly affable; flattering my self that he would, like Sir Sidney Smith when at Manchester, condescend to speak of me, and his name was "a tower of strength," I intended to see or write to him; but on the very day of my application, he received the intelligence of Mr Percival's sudden and shocking death, and immediately went off to London. This was a death-stroke to my humble hopes, and the next morning I left Stafford once more for Litchfield.

Here I found the theatre open, under the direction of Mr Watson, junior, the son of my Cheltenham manager; but no situation for me. Mrs Col. Patten, a niece of Mr Garrick's, offered to pay the charges of the house, (more than, perhaps, they then sometimes took,) if they would grant me a benefit, but no—*that* could not be. While this was in agitation, I went to Tamworth, about nine miles off—

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recited at a lady's boarding-school;—I wished to have permission for the Town-Hall, which with some difficulty I obtained, as it had been recently repaired and painted, and looked beautifully. Several officers on the night did me the honour to attend, with ladies and some other gentlemen, and I had a more numerous company than I expected;—but, ah me! more than half went away after waiting an hour, being disappointed of the music which I had engaged, who were gone to an adjacent fair, and thought, perhaps, no more about me; that was not fair—but I could not help it, I could procure no other. The officers, however, and a few more would not go—were content with their own music, and I danced to "the rattling drum and squeaking fife."

I then returned to Litchfield. I had a strong inclination to go to Birmingham, and hearing that a camp was then formed between the two places, it fully determined me to go. I was received well there—recited in two of the officers marquees or tents, and was liberally rewarded. I went then to Birmingham; a very full company was there—staid two days—saw I could do nothing, and returned. As the camp did not lie above a mile out of my way, and as I knew it would be about the officers' dinner hour, and the days almost at the longest, I ventured once more, without knowing the "word," to enter the camp. I was again in the marquees, or mess-rooms, of two parties of officers, and handsomely treated. I then returned, in good time, to Litchfield, and had a night there, which answered my highest expectations.

From thence I went to Loughborough, but, on account of the soldiers having but lately left, and others expecting hourly, the town was in such an unsettled state, that I could effect but little. Soon

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after this, chance led me into Melton-Mowbray. Here I must apologize to my indulgent reader; I said that Leek, in Staffordshire, was the last theatre that I was engaged in;—true, so it was—but I should have mentioned *this* and *another*, previous to *that*, but the fact is, I have done, what I frequently have—lost my road! And considering my numerous perigrinations, how often I have been obliged to "cross over and figure in, cast off, lead up and down and then back again," it cannot be wondered at; and as I never, intentionally, directed any one out of their proper path, and wantonly led them out of *their road*, I trust this mistake will be forgiven.

At this Melton-Mowbray, I stumbled upon my old Kidderminster and Horncastle manager, whom I had been with before, and at both times broke up his company. He informed me that he was to go to Hinckley, in Leicestershire, and was sure of great business there. He rented, as his father-in-law, (Hamilton,) had done before him, a pretty compact theatre in Mowbray. After my joining him, we played only about a month, and went off to Hinckley. Here we had indeed good business for some time;—very much supported by the far-famed Dr Cheshire's numerous patients for cures of deformity; mostly very young people, from all parts, and some obliged to be under his immediate eye, have continued in Hinckley for many years; yet in the street, to a stranger, and especially in the theatre, they made an odd or formidable appearance; some with steel collars on—steel bars crossing their heads like a casque or helmet; others, all up their backs—some with these from the feet up to their knees, exactly as if they had fetters on; their polished furniture in the sun-shine, or in the theatre, had a strange effect, as I said, till the eye became accus



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tomed to it; yet these young ladies and gentlemen, thus accoutred, "clad in complete steel," would walk about Hinckley streets, as unconcernedly and composed, as an Oxonian in term-time in his cap and gown. Here too several artificers were employed in making these polished articles, by Dr Cheshire; my landlord was one; he told me they had good and constant employment; for what with new patients constantly arriving, and the old young ones growing up, and every year requiring a change of dress, they were sometimes obliged to send for, or glad to accept of any decent travelling smith that was on the tramp. In this case, my host used to tell me, that being unacquainted with this peculiar branch of business, it would be a long time before they could understand, or render them any essential service in the nicety of the art. This, I readily believed; as an excellent painter, not knowing the effect for scene-painting; a good musician, a carpenter or tailor set to work in a theatre who never entered one before, would feel themselves as awkward, and for some time be almost as much at a loss, as if they had been brought up to very different professions.

We went on very well here, till a young man, unluckily for us all, had the first benefit;—he pretended to be unwell, but the doctor could not discover his complaint;—he had a great deal of plausibility about him, and somehow had ingratiated himself very much with the ladies and the town; the manager too was blinded and uncommonly partial to him; he had a genteel house and full; two days after, he went off, without paying the manager his charges, his lodgings or any body, with, as it was supposed, full thirty pounds in his pocket. His misconduct made such a talk in the town, and brought the company into such discredit, that the



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innocent suffered for the guilty, as often is the case, and the theatre was deserted. Here again then, for the third and last time I was with him, he broke up.

Thinking now to get up to London, I went to Leicester, and then to Northampton, where, being a total stranger, I consulted with the principal printer and another about my trying a night; the master of the Head Inn obligingly told me that I should have his elegant Assembly-Room gratis, and likewise the wax-lights that were left a week before at the last ball; I had seven hundred bills printed and some tickets, for which the printer too, with great generosity, would take no more than barely what the cards and paper cost him, notwithstanding I had a wonderfully good room full. These acts of kindness received here and elsewhere, on the like, or on any *other* occasion, I trust I shall ever most gratefully remember and be ready to acknowledge, although, perhaps, I should forget the name.

While in Northampton, having wrote to London, and received an answer contrary to my wishes, the theatres (except the Hay-Market,) being shut, and I now almost as great a stranger there as any where, resolved to alter my plan, and instead of going up to London, to go down from it; for I knew, like *Falstaff*, that "I had a wonderful alacrity in sinking;"—and that as I had been going down-hill all my life, it would be much easier and pleasanter for me, and ultimately, perhaps, prove as profitable. Committing myself then humbly to chance, (as we call it,) for the event, I went to Wellingborough. Here, again, I found a friend in a printer, Mr March; I had a reverend gentleman, through his interest, and by his means, who kindly exerted themselves, and made me a very genteel private party, who behaved

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with liberality. From this I proceeded to Peterborough; although I confess I received but little encouragement, yet I ventured to announce a night; it answered full as well as I expected, and Mr Robertson, printer, and brother to the manager I have mentioned, made no charge for the bills.

I easily then found my way to Stamford—I could not have the theatre, it was in such a confused state; with the consent of Mr Gosley, I had his elegant dancing, or Assembly-Room. I had an elegant company too; but these places, admitting only one part of the town, I could not expect it to prove as advantageous to me as a theatre. From here to Spalding. Here I found a pretty snug play-house, belonging to the Lincoln company, but I could not procure it, as it was then granted to some young men of the town, for three or four nights in a month's time, partly for their own amusement, and for the benefit of the Russian prisoners. Under these circumstances, and at that time, as I should only have made a fruitless attempt, I proceeded on to Boston. While I had there a matter in agitation, I saw some of these young men from Spalding; they were to open on the forementioned plan in three weeks—wished me to come and join them for that time, to instruct them, prompt them, &c. As they had a prospect of success on this occasion—as they were to deduct all charges and expenses, in which I was of course included, before any benefit could derive from it—and as my plan at Boston was not ripe for execution—wishing too "to while away the dreary winter," I accepted their proposal, submitting terms to their own generosity, and leaving my wife at Boston, repaired to Spalding.

Here I had an infinite deal of trouble with them all, except two, from morn till night; evening re-

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hearsals till twelve o'clock. At length they played for three successive and successful nights; the same play and farce;—"John Bull; or an Englishman's Fire-side," with the "Jew and Doctor;" on the fourth night the same, which was the worst, for the benefit of the poor. I should imagine after paying all expenses, there was above L.130 clear; but I must needs say their expenses were made much heavier than they should have been; on rehearsal nights, tea, wine, &c. On their play-nights such a profusion of wine, spirits, porter, ale, oranges and eggs, "as would have made an old coach crack again." From the quantities of the last articles, one might have been led to think that, instead of "John Bull," they had an oratorio or opera to go through, and that each wished to emulate, or surpass, if possible, a Catalani, a Dickons, or a Braham.

My task allotted was full sufficient employment for me behind the scenes, so that I had no time nor inclination to suck eggs or oranges, and very little for any thing else; and indeed, as I found they were far from being free on these occasions, it made me as shy and backward as any one could wish. I feared that I might suffer for their prodigality, and so perhaps, I did; for I cannot think, with respect to payment, that they behaved generously. I paid my own board and lodging—I put them to no expense—they took up my time ten hours in the day—they were perfect in the words, and that was all; excepting two, they wanted a tutor to teach them how to speak them, and tell them the business of the play, in which was a great deal; in fine, after all my instructions and pains, time and trouble, I confess, I felt myself not thoroughly satisfied with L.3; besides, as some of them were gentlemen and could well afford it, and as it did not come immediately from

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their own pockets, they might have considered of what they knew,—that I was a "stranger," had lodgings to pay for, and a wife to support at Boston, exclusive of my services, and my journey from thence and back. There were three in this party whom I acquainted with my dissatisfaction; they thought my complaint just, and used their best endeavours to remove the cause, but without effect—the majority was against them; and these three, who evinced some generosity and hospitality towards me, were, I believe, three of the party who could least afford it. I was in hopes to have procured the theatre after these had finished, but they were obliged to go to work on it the very next morning to prepare it for the Lincoln company. I then engaged the best room that I could, but it did not answer, so the next day, I took my solitary walk (sixteen miles) back to Boston.

Here the Boston and Lincoln company had been performing for some time, and I could not obtain the use of the theatre. I then recited at the Rev. Mr Banks's grammar-school—at another reverend gentleman's, and at another's a short distance from the town; likewise at a ladies boarding-school, and at two or three private parties. I was favoured with an elegant room there at Mr Plummer's, the White Hart Inn, when I expected and should have had a genteel and numerous company; but soldiers coming in, almost unexpectedly, and a fracas happening at the critical time of my opening, rendered it abortive. To Mr and Mrs Plummer I am greatly indebted; their kindness and generosity, blended with the greatest cordiality and real politeness, I shall never forget. I cannot enumerate all, nor half the worthy liberal persons there to whom I



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have been obliged; yet, I must be strangely forgetful, if I did not here willingly pay the small debt of gratitude, (the only one which at present I am ever likely to pay), to that respectable and worthy gentleman, Dr Crane; his kind attendance on my wife for many weeks, his advice, expensive medicines, his friendly relief and interesting himself so much in our behalf, his condescension and conciliatory manners, will ever endear him to me, "while mem'ry holds a seat in this distracted globe,"

Boston is a large, cheap and pleasant place; the inhabitants free, open, generous and polite; gratefully I left it, and by water went to Lincoln. Here I now procured, what I could not before, the handsome Assembly-Room, which answered very well. Again, Providence opened doors to me, and I found many friends. After which I proceeded to Gainsborough. I "went by water; I would not go by land." I could not, though I met with some kind encouragment, obtain the room I wanted, which perhaps I might have done, if I had had the honour to have been made a mason, so without making any effort, I put on my strongest shoes, and walked off to Doncaster.

What I had heard of Doncaster I found to be very true;—that it was not only a pleasant place, but that it contained a vast number of genteel people, possessed of affluence and humanity, and unbounded generosity;—I experienced it all. I arrived here, however, at a very critical period; a new mayor soon coming into office, and the York company here. After waiting some time, engaged the best room I could, and, by the interest and kind exertions of a gentleman, universally esteemed, who has been twice or thrice the mayor there, one of



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the most condescending patrons I ever had, John Wright, Esq.; to lose whose friendship I should think one of my greatest misfortunes—by and through him alone, I had a room full of the politest company, and to him I am almost wholly indebted for the many presents and benevolence of the generous inhabitants.

Having been informed that a new company was about to open now at Retford, I went there, but found I had been misinformed;—it was only a set of young men who had obtained the use of the theatre for one night, but could not get the mayor's permission to represent a play. They applied to me—I applied to the mayor and obtained it. I performed for them more than I intended, *Old Norval*, danced, and *Plainway*, in the farce of "Raising the Wind." After all this, relinquishing my own night, and feeling it fruitless to attempt another, these young men were too old for me.

It was now the beginning of dark December—the winter had set in most severely. A few of the few genteel people there, from seeing me dance, offered me their young branches to attend, for the Christmas vacation at least—six weeks or longer. The snow deep—my wife ill—"I knew not how to get away, so prudently resolved to stay." I then opened a kind of evening school for the young men of the town, and after lowering my terms to almost nothing, found it would not do. Their conduct and behaviour was such as I was unused to, and had not patience to put up with;—they were fitter to be in a bear-garden than a dancing-school, and a blind scraper at a two-penny hop had been too good for them;—they were mean, ungovernable, noisy, and full of mischief, which they called fun;—even some of my young gentlemen in my morning-school behaved so

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indecorously, that they caused me to lose some of my young ladies, and when I properly complained of their misconduct to their parents, instead of reprehending them, "the lot fell upon Jonas,"—I lost *them* too! Again, when I had given private as well as public instructions to the daughter of a fiddler, (a musician I mean,) as he understood country-dancing, and was used to the manners of the natives, he set up for himself, and jockeyed me out of my evening *hop*, which he was welcome to;—fit master for fit scholars; but 'twas a paltry action. The publicans and sinners, too, the lower tradesmen, were of a piece; mean, extortionate, and ungrateful;—for if a stranger had laid out twenty pounds with some of them, they would not give him credit for sixpence. "They never trust a stranger;" and, I believe they would still call an unsettled person so if he had been there five years. This has no reference to the first ladies and gentlemen, or first tradesmen there; for the polite and generous people, and men of rectitude will be such, place them where you will;—"Lots were found in Sodom." I experienced hospitality and benevolence from several, particularly from a respectable family at Barnby-Moor, four miles off; but if Retford consisted wholly of such persons as I was connected with, of the lower class, and low indeed they were, as Cromwell said when he turned out his parliament, "Oh, Sir Harry Vane, Sir Harry Vane; God keep me from Sir Harry Vane," I should exclaim, Oh, Retford, Retford; God keep me from Retford! These few last lines have given me more pain than all I have written; yet it was a task I secretly felt imposed upon me, and could not help it; but I have wandered too long in the dismal shades of darkness, and, now "gladly I revisit the realms of day."

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From hence, then, I proceeded in my weary way to Sheffield;—I foretold that my success here would be extremely great, or none at all; no medium;—it proved the latter. In the largest manufacturing town in England, when disputes arise between the masters and journeymen, which was the unfortunate case at present, it spreads and affects almost every one, more or less. Except a few, all the men had struck here for a rise of wages, a short time before I entered the town. The masters and men continued firm in their determination;—meetings after meetings were held, without any thing final being resolved on, for many weeks. During this, it was in vain for me to attempt offering any amusement, when hundreds were wanting a baker and a butcher. I was, however, fortunate, in falling in with a very respectable gentleman, a schoolmaster, at Attercliff, two miles from Sheffield;—he had full 120 scholars, of whom 80 at least were boarders. Once in two years he made it a custom, with the parents' or guardians' approbation, to engage the theatre in their Christmas holidays, to deliver select scenes from favourite authors, prologues, epilogues, Latin orations, French, &c. A month previous to this, I received a polite letter from him, offering me very genteel terms if I would attend his pupils, and give such instructions respecting the stage business as he might not be so well acquainted with. I readily and cheerfully accepted his proposal. I found this gentleman affable, friendly, generous, and hospitable, and his pupils were gentlemen. During the month we had frequently rehearsals at his own house and in the Theatre, for the use of which he paid seven guineas before the performance, which took place soon after Christmas day. As there was no money

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taken, only cards delivered out, gratis, to parents and friends, it may well be supposed there was a house full, and the boxes were elegantly filled. The young gentlemen concerned in it were nearly fifty, literally perfect, and acquitted themselves to the satisfaction of their friends and credit of their master.

Although the town dispute was unsettled as ever, yet, after this, I was advised to try my fortune in the theatre. I found, upon enquiry, that there was no less than thirty proprietors, and that the theatre would not be let on any other terms, to any one whatever, but by the paying seven guineas, and *that* a week before hand. I thought with Sharp, "they wouldn't have my custom." By the kind assistance of a friend, however, having surmounted this difficulty, I ventured to proceed. At night, the time of my beginning being seven, I waited till half-past eight, not knowing what to do. Upon enquiry, I understood there was not eight pounds in the house, and that there was no probability of my taking eight shillings more. While I was debating with myself three of the proprietors came round to me; one was the gentleman who kept the keys and had received my seven guineas. They obligingly advised me—of course, against their interest—not to perform; and in that case, they would take it upon themselves to return me the deposited seven guineas; considering that my lighting up the house, which yet was scarcely open—the music, door-keepers, &c. would still make me worse off, if I did perform. I thankfully adopted their advice, and put up with the first loss.

As I pursued the same plan here as in Stamford theatre, I am certain that had it not been for the unhappy difference existing in the town, the gallery,

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a large one, at sixpence each, would have been completely full, paid at least every expense, and the receipt of the pit and boxes proved a comfortable overplus; but it could not be helped. I was, however, greatly indebted to many ladies and gentlemen for their politeness and generosity, and in a few days set off to Wakefield.

Here I immediately experienced great condescension and liberality. I recited frequently in private families and select parties, though I could not procure the room I wished for, and was afraid of venturing, after Sheffield, on the theatre; especially as it was well known that it was already engaged by Messrs Incledon, Sinclair, Cresswell, &c. for one night, and were daily expected. Had I attempted before or after such eminent performers, though I should not have had ten people in the house, I had been justly served for my presumption. Shortly they arrived. By an order from Mr Incledon, my wife and I went to the theatre. I think there was about seventy pounds in the house;—the audience was highly entertained, and it was a great treat to me. When I again was kindly entertained by more than one family, but one indeed in particular, and having received many favours—understanding too that the York company would soon arrive, I thought it time to make my bow, and went off to Leeds.

Here, after a day or two, the first good fortune I met with, (for such I must call it, trifling as it may appear,) was a good comfortable lodging;—and yet, not solely for the lodging's sake, but the master and mistress, the sons and daughters were all so attentive and so obliging, that from that time to this I know not which I regard the most. I soon had the pleasure of receiving

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hopes of encouragement; my hopes were realized. After a little, I recited at a ladies' boarding-school, then at another, then at two more, and at a great one for young gentlemen; in one of these, I had the kind permission to repeat my recitations in their elegant school-room, (gratis at Mr Kempley's,) with alterations and additions: This allowance and indulgence was certainly necessary, being on a public occasion—printed bills, &c., many things may pass current in a theatre, be thought inoffensive, and not only so, but highly applauded, that would be very indecorous to give before young ladies in a boarding-school. In such a genteel, juvenile assembly, I should think myself, for instance, greatly deficient in delicacy and judgment, to recite "The picture of a playhouse, or, Bucks have at ye all." Yet I spoke it twice one season in Drury-Lane Theatre, with great applause, when a lad--and scarcely being arrived even at the age of lad-hood. I have since thought it very improper, and too great an indulgence for the managers to allow; but this winter was the rage for "Bucks have at ye all." Mr King, (the original,) Mr Palmer, Mr Dodd, Mr Robert Palmer, a boy then like myself, delivered it twice or three times each. At length, Miss Younge, (afterwards Mrs Pope,) that much admired tragedy actress, was advised by some ill-informed friends to recite it at her benefit, thinking it would "draw," as we call it; but the scanty shew of ladies in the boxes was a plain indication that the attempt was prejudicial instead of profitable, and she had the mortification, for the first and last time in her life, of feeling and hearing the displeasure of the audience in constant hisses. By the same rule, although I have sung "The little farthing rush-light," in a theatre, twice of a night, before their Majesties, yet I should think it rather

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improper to give in a seminary for young ladies only. After all this, I was strongly advised and encouraged to engage the theatre; I found upon enquiry, that I might have it for five guineas—I was fearful, but at length ventured. Leeds is a large manufacturing town like Sheffield, but their merchandize is of a softer nature; there was here, too, no unhappy disputes between masters and men—they have here not only a *large* gallery, but *two*—I had nearly eleven pounds in them in sixpences; for I reduced the prices as formerly, not in sixpences literally, for there were not six sixpences taken, it was all in copper—I never had such a load of money in my life! the pit and boxes good, and a great number of my young friends and patrons from the schools there. When I attended them only it was my custom to give in a written "bill of fare," of what my little larder contained; a little variety, fish, flesh and fowl, with a little plain fruit; but it could not boast of luxuries—no delicacies, no *made* dishes, no venison, turtle, pines, &c. This being made known, if they approved it, they had only to select what suited their inclination and appetite. I never on those occasions presented what they might think was too coarse a dish, or over-done, and then no blame could possibly attach to me, provided what I set before them was *well* done. In my theatrical bill, I placed some dishes before them which they had not tasted at home; and which, being perhaps under less restraint, though they might be somewhat higher seasoned, yet they appeared to relish, and it seemed to agree with them here; for, as Shakespeare says,

"Remember, it is place that lessens, and sets off."

In fine, the whole amount of this house was about L.27, which enabled me, with a due sense of all their



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favours to make an "honourable retreat," as the Irishman did, by going forward to York.

In my way to York, I stopped at Tadcaster, on account of the weather; a gentleman who had seen me at the theatre in Leeds, advised me to try one night there—I could not procure a genteel room. I was offered one in the house of a respectable gentleman there, Mr Dawson, who said that the time being so very short (as I was anxious to push on,) he could not make it worth my while, but would cause it to be known, and ask a few friends to tea, to which I was invited, but did not, though sent for, think proper to go. I found there indeed a friendly and genteel party; their seeming satisfaction and affability made me feel no embarrassment nor the least fatigue, and I really passed a very agreeable evening, and, considering the circumstances and smallness of the company, much more profitable than I could reasonably have expected. The next day, (weather fine and frosty,) I safely arrived in York. I had left my wife at Leeds with my worthy landlord and his worthy family, waiting for a box I expected from London, and till I had provided a lodging; which after a week or two, I got settled in with a Mr and Mrs Hops, Fleece-Inn, pavement. We had above stairs all the quietness and accommodation of a private house, and in many cases, more than any one could bestow; here too, as at Leeds, all the family, servants and all, were made of the same stuff, all striving to out-do each other by their attention and civility. On Christmas morning my wife arrived, a fatal day to an unfortunate gentleman of Leeds, who that day was brought from thence against his will to York—a gentleman of great property, ranked high in his profession of the law—whose word the day before would have stood for any thing—but let me

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proceed no further. He came into York, but never to go out of it. I was received here again with great kindness: I was encouraged to give out a night; Mr Nokes here, dancing master, who remembered me in London, politely offered me his elegant Assembly-room, gratis. I had the honour of the names and patronage of the officers of the 5th Light Dragoons, and, by permission, their band too; my night was on the 3d of February: the new Lord Mayor then came into office—a grand dinner on the occasion given. My birth-day, "a triple festival;" this was in the year 1815, I was then sixty. As I had reason to expect, so it turned out—a room full of elegant company; every one was pleased to be pleased, and I more so than any. Most of the ladies and gentlemen paid more for their tickets than the fixed terms of admission—all the officers did, and some who could not be there; the Mayor, who, unluckily for me, was obliged to go out of town the morning of my play-day, left me half-a-guinea for his ticket. When I thought to give the master of the band a trifling compliment for their attendance, the officers had ordered them not to receive a penny from me; they were fully satisfied.

Lady Johnstone, although I was already indebted to her goodness, joined with some others, particularly the Lady of the Bank, in patronizing and supporting me another night. I was again obliged with the same room, gratis; again had an elegant assemblage, which would have been more numerous, had not the weather been so unfavourable; many ladies and gentlemen, however, who had intended to have come, sent me, at least, the price of their ticket; but the generosity of Lady Johnstone I needs must mention, which could not but surprise me, as I had experienced it before, when her ladyship the day after

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sent me five pounds. I had the satisfaction, unthought of on my part, after this, of being invited and reciting in three or four private parties, and then, with grateful feelings, quitted York. Before which, I should acknowledge also, the kindness and attention there shewn to my wife by Dr Browne.

I proceeded then, footing it downwards, through Easingwold and Thirsk, and in two days walked into Northallerton. The same day, as settled, my wife arrived by the coach from York. When we had rested a day, "the interim having weigh'd it," I did not attempt, Jew like, "any thing in my way," but walked off as usual; our "hostess kept her state," and I rode off, as usual, 15 miles to Darlington. Here I could have had a genteel room, but I greatly feared I should meet with no success, the town consisting almost entirely of persons whose principles are so averse, so very opposite to theatrical matters—Quakers and Methodists, (as they are vulgarly called)—My having made inquiries concerning a room, soon caused my person and profession to be made known. I was accosted in a friendly manner by several respectable people of their character; one gentleman in particular, whom I heard afterwards was what the common people commonly call, "a strong Methodist;" he invited me home to his house—behaved with great affability; his discourse to me, 'tis true, was serious, but inoffensive, liberal, generous, instructive; from him, and perhaps by his means, to my great surprise and for the first time in my life, I received many presents, and if I had delivered bills, avoiding any thing dramatical, but merely "Readings and Recitations," from Milton, Pope, Young, Rowe, Harvey, Thomson, Addison, &c., such as mostly I gave before the dean of St Asaph, and other gentlemen of theology, in the great hotel,

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Buxton, from what I there saw, and by what I have since heard, I have sufficient cause to believe that I should have been favoured with great encouragement, and their liberal support. I went from here to Stockton: here was Mr Franklin and his company—they had been performing some time, and were on the point of concluding, which I thought might be well worth while waiting for, as they generously offered me the use of their theatre, gratis: I performed immediately after, and cleared about six pounds. I then steered my course to Sunderland; a young man here, a good singer, whose abilities were opposite to any that I might possess, would make I thought a pleasing contrast, and be a relief to the audience as well as myself; I took him in as partner—he had sung in the theatre here before; pretended to know every body, talked of the clubs and of having great interest. We performed not to a great house, it is true; but he took me in, for, after the night, I saw him no more. Under the idea that it would turn out for the best, we agreed that the first night should go in his name, tickets and every thing; that I should try a second, and the profits of both were to be then equally divided; but he was prudent enough to keep the emoluments of the first himself, and second there was none. I did indeed try a night afterwards in a genteel room, but to little purpose; no thanks to him, but I received several favours in the town, though insufficient for defraying my expences. From here I made rather an awkward backward movement to Durham. I was told here, as indeed I was at Sunderland, that it was a wrong time of the year, (the summer,) for me to expect any encouragement; the schools shut, nobody in town; however, I ventured a night upon as close a scale as I could, but



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again without any great effect. From hence, I did not take "a trip to Scarborough," but Newcastle. Here, too. a great many of the many genteel people who reside here, were from home, though there were many still left; "Enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away." I made application to several, who kindly encouraged me to proceed—I did so; engaged a genteel. commodious room, but not the Assembly room; "that was not upon the cards:" the company was not numerous, but a subscription was entered into by a vast many ladies and gentlemen, and tradesmen of the first respectability. I waited some time after for the arrival of Mr M'Cready's company; overloaded when it did come, and no room for me. Thinking it would not take me up more than about six days, I went over to South and North Shields, but I was gone six weeks. I exhibited at both places publicly, and frequently to select private parties; it may readily be supposed by my long stay, and sending to my wife at Newcastle twice a-week a little remittance, that I met with some success.

As the reader may perceive that I have usually, in these my humiliating travels, left my wife behind till I had procured a lodging, or "as circumstances and occasions varied," so now I had left her at Chester-le-Street, from whence I came into Newcastle on the Sunday, and having settled on the Monday in a lodging, I immediately sent off a letter and remittance to my wife, and expected her the next day—but no! Two days after, I sent another remittance to her in a parcel, but still no wife! During all this time and painful suspense, equally affecting both of us, my wife was in the same place, in Newcastle! The case was this: I think there are

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but two inns in Chester-le-Street; that in which we unluckily put up at (for I forgot the name and sign), was, in going from Newcastle to Chester, on the right-hand side. We got in there on the Friday night, and I came away from there, as I said, on Sunday morning, not having asked for my little bill, 'tis true, nor being uneasy about it, as I knew I could send it in a day or two, when I sent for my wife, and for my things. This being the case, on the Monday morning, after detaining every article I had left, this humane lady would not let my wife continue there till the next day, but insisted on her leaving her house that morning; whereas, if she had staid but six hours longer, she would have received my letter and remittance. My wife, distressed, flurried, not knowing what to do or how to act, took the coach at the door for Newcastle, without knowing even where or how to find me.

The coach put up at one of the principal hotels and taverns—the Turf. This would have made much against her in another place, and with other kind of people, in her present circumstances; for, to speak a painful truth, she had not, at this moment, a penny left. But this respectable house, happily for her, was kept by respectable persons, possessed of the greatest humanity—Mr and Mrs Loftus. The old saying here was truly verified;—"Providence never shuts one door, but it opens another." My wife told, soon as possible, her situation to Mrs Loftus, who bade her make herself easy, (Heaven bless her!) she should want for nothing. During five or six days, in this uncertain state, my wife was paid as much, nay, perhaps more attention, than if she had possessed a purse and pocket full. At length, with the greatest delicacy and tenderness, Mrs Loftus

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told my wife that if she pleased, one of the coachmen should be ordered, in going to Chester-le-Street, to enquire if there had been any letter sent to her, and call for it as he came back; he did so, and brought word that the woman of the house said, she had got two parcels, but would not deliver them, unless my wife went for them herself—well, there was no remedy. For all this time, though we were within two hundred yards of each other, yet her sight being bad, and I a stranger there, making fruitless enquiries for her, and in our present circumstances, my not having any more idea of her being in such a house as Mr Loftus's, than of her entering the town in her own chariot and six, unless she had gone, we might (take all this together,) been no nearer meeting than if we had been two hundred miles distant. My wife accordingly went the next day; on her asking for my bill, this conscionable lady had made it double to what I imagined it, so that my wife was obliged to leave it unsettled till I sent for it, and the things I left. On her return to Mrs Loftus, at Newcastle, knowing then where to find me, she came. I then sent to Chester for my things and the amount of her unreasonable bill; I mentioned it in my line to her, but to no effect;—no consideration for the inconvenience, trouble, expense, and above all, the anxiety which her folly and brutality had cost us; she persevered in her demand. Had it not been for the kindness, humanity and wonderful generosity of the Loftus's, we had never met again, perhaps. What a difference between the houses—what a much greater difference between the people, the owners—as much, full as much as between the lion and the lamb!

The late Mr Lamash, my old friend in Drury-

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Lane Theatre, the Hay-Market, and in Edinburgh, was married to a daughter of these worthy people, the Loftus's. After his decease, she returned home to her parents; when, in bathing one morning, she was suddenly taken ill, and to the inexpressible grief of them, and all who knew her, (for I have heard she was an accomplished and most amiable young lady), she was brought home a corpse! While in Newcastle, as I had for some time entertained a wish of returning to Edinburgh, I wrote to Mrs Henry Siddons for a situation once more in the Theatre-Royal. I received a polite answer from her—too soon, alas! that "there was no vacancy, the company was quite full." Having returned from South and North Shields, and received all the kind encouragement and favour that I possibly could expect or hope for in Newcastle, with a grateful adieu, yet scarcely knowing what to do, I went off to Hexham.

Here I found, to my regret, that not only "The Battle of Hexham," but many other plays had been performed here by a small company in this small town, who had staid here above two months, till the town was tired and drained. I sadly experienced it; for having above fifty printed bills by me, which, with little alteration I could make shift with; being kindly offered the room they had, gratis,—music too, my expenses were nothing; so I ventured to give out two nights—but nobody came; the town, for the present, was completely surfeited, and could not bear to look at any thing like a play-bill. The Rev. Mr Clarke and a few more gentlemen, with two or three ladies, made me obligingly a generous compliment for my trouble and loss of time; so consoling myself with saying,—"'Tis well it's no worse,"—I pushed my boat off for Carlisle.

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Here, my poor mother was born and buried! Here, too, I received an account from London of my brother's death, (John Everard, oil and colour-man, No. 19, Houndsditch, with an old chest, and a few useful articles in it, but the carriage of which coming to twenty-two shillings, and not a penny in it, really inconvenienced me. His wife's sister's daughter he took into his house out of charity, after she had lost her mother; she used to *uncle* him at every word, and ingratiated herself so much with him, that she appeared like a mistress in the house, instead of a servant. She acknowledged that he had left me a quantity of *books*, but did not think it worth while to send them. Yes, and I shall always think, *many other* things too, that "they did not think worth while to send;"—so be it. Except his son, the Rev. Mr Edward Everard, in Kent, (I know not the place,) I have not now any relations in the world, but I trust that, through Providence, I shall still find *friends* in it. I flattered myself, that (here) I should have made it worth my while; but no—always something in the way—the thoughts of the whole city were taken up in contemplating and preparing for the ensuing *election*; I could not attempt any thing, I found, till *that* was over. Partly by advice, and partly, I confess, from necessity, I *did* so; when the storm was over, there fell a sudden calm, insomuch that it was not in *my* poor power, to awaken a gentle breeze. Apprehensive, however, that some might kick up an ungentle breeze with me, and, "faith, not without some reason, if you knew all," I felt myself compelled to take the best room that I could obtain, and trust to chance. As I expected, it did not answer; but some respectable persons having given a favourable report of my performance, and many promises made to me,

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which were not performed, I afterwards received the complimentary price of a ticket from several of the first people. Here, added to the other obligations I owe in Carlisle, I cannot, will not, omit those I am under to Mr and Mrs Wilson, of the Bush Inn. When I acknowledge that the kindness and generosity of Mrs Wilson can only be equalled by that of Mrs Loftus and Mrs Plummer, I must shut the book, for I can say no more.

And now, the great but impertinent question forced itself once more upon me, of "What am I to do next?"—"Where shall Othello go?" I had little or no hopes of being engaged in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh, from the letter I received at Newcastle;—I was aware too, that "merit in rags meets with few admirers," and that "in tattered robes small vices do appear." I likewise have some reason to believe, that of late years the managers have formed a resolution, if not absolutely entered into a kind of compact, or agreement with each other, "Not to engage any performer who is at that time out of business, and, as they term it, comes across 'em." If this is really so, it is surely a very hard case; I think, cruel and preposterous; for if, by any chance, by the whim and caprice of a manager, a performer's inattention, by a company suddenly breaking up, or, in fine, from any cause, he should once be disengaged, according to the forementioned system, he might continue so half his life. Though I cannot believe that such a strange unreasonable purpose was ever adopted, yet I know that when I have been in a theatre, I have had more than one engagement offered me to go to another, and that if I've been disengaged I never could get one, but by the greatest chance, and when I happened to be really wanted;—and

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even in that case, let a performer's merit and utility be what they may, if he comes across 'em, he is looked upon by the manager and the company as a "scape-goat."

Under all these disadvantages, with all these humiliations and mortifications staring me in the face, I determined at length to indulge my propensity, and make the best of my way to Edinburgh. I walked the next day to Longtown.

This is a very small, clean, and pleasant town. I staid here, on account of my wife, a fortnight; had a kind of a friendly night, and was befriended. I then proceeded on to Langholm.

I had a night here on a similar plan, after which, I was kindly invited to give my recitations at the Miss Malcolm's, about three miles off; they were pleased to express very great satisfaction: I was hospitably entertained, and generously rewarded. My wife being very unwell, and in a comfortable private lodging there, with a very accommodating hostess, I left her there, and went on to Hawick. Here again, as oft before, I was at a loss what course to steer; considering at last, that sometimes I had gone to the right, and been wrong, and often too much to the left, I determined to take neither the west road, nor the east road, but for once try the medium. I then went on to Kelso: I had heard it was a town of spirit, and encouraged theatricals. Another inducement to my going there, was the hope of finding a relation of my wife's, Dr Wilson—perhaps the only one she now has in being. I had seen him too in London, and remembering how much through life I have been beholden to the worthy gentlemen of the faculty, how greatly they can serve and recommend the unfortunate stranger; considering that my wife's mother and his mother were



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own sisters—for this was the relationship—putting all this together, I thought I had some reason to hope that if he was still living, and on the spot, he could and would essentially serve me. In this hope, however, I was disappointed. I was glad to hear he was living, but sorry to find that he was not on the spot; I learned that he had retired from business, and dwelt near eight miles off. I could not walk there and back in one day, and could not afford two, so I had not the pleasure of seeing him. I was kindly encouraged in a most friendly manner to try a night here, but was afraid to venture: The expences are certain, the success uncertain. Hearing that his Grace the Duke of Roxburgh was now at his seat about two miles off, I went with a letter addressed to him on the subject; I heard nothing from him on that head, but his grace obligingly sent me two one-guinea notes; one of which the next day I remitted to my wife at Langholm, and in two more days got into Dalkeith. Not finding here the Duke of Buccleuch, and wishing to get to my proposed journey's end, I only rested here the night, and arrived safe about the middle of April, 1816, in the city of Edinburgh.

My first care and business in Edinburgh was to apply to Mrs Henry Siddons and Mr W. Murray to procure an engagement, if possible, in the theatre, thinking that, notwithstanding the negative letter I received at Newcastle, some change of the company might have happened in so long an interim, or that my being now immediately upon the spot might occasion, perhaps, an alteration of sentiment in my favour; but "no," encore. The company was full, and five or six performers in possession of the characters which were in my line, or such as I might wish to play. Now, then, this hope was



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gone. My next step was to apply to the Hon. Henry Erskine, to whom (as I believe I have said) I was recommended by his brother, Lord Erskine, when in London. He was not in Edinburgh, and not been for many months past, and it might be many more ere the city saw him. Now, *that* hope was gone. Having, however, sent to my wife at Langholm that I was settled in a private lodging, she came; her journey was rendered *much easier* and pleasanter than it would have been, through the interest, kindness, and generosity of the Miss Malcolms. Now, then, what resource had I?—"the old one,"—"I was obliged to look at home!" and a poor look-out that was, heaven knows. After a few weeks, and when the theatre was shut, I engaged for one night Mr M'Ewan's room, Royal Exchange Coffee-house. A month before the time, I had the voluntary promise of a lady and two gentlemen of the theatre and three musicians to assist me, beside the one that I had engaged. On the morning of my intended performance, as I had previously waited upon the honourable the magistrates and obtained their kind permission for this matter, I was surprised at being sent for to the Council Chamber;—The business was, that my bills announced not only songs and duetts, prologues, epilogues, and select speeches, but whole scenes taken from "Rosina," and the "Poor Soldier," to be performed by this lady and the two gentlemen of the theatre, which the magistrates were not aware of, and which they were apprehensive the managers would be offended at. I acquainted them that Mr Murray (then in London) was "informed thoroughly of the case," and that he obligingly told these performers that not only they, but any more of the company, were welcome to assist me if they pleased. They were

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satisfied with this. I had left the performers and musicians settling their business and rehearsing. I told them that I was obliged to go to the Chamber, and they promised to be with me in time, the musicians at six o'clock. We were to begin at seven.—The time came—the company came—but no performers, no music came, even at eight o'clock. I never was so distressed, so shamefully disappointed. I knew not where any of them lived; I sent out for other music in vain. At length the lady came, and after her the musician I at first engaged, but not in such a collected state as to be properly capable of accompanying her songs. A number of very respectable genteel people were now gone, hearing no music and seeing no one there but myself; they went away displeased, no doubt, thinking, perhaps, I meant to impose upon them, or at least had been very inattentive in the affair. To those who had the patience to wait so long I thought it my duty to perform, and accordingly made a beginning, flattering myself that these very friendly gentlemen would, before I had half done, "make their first appearance here." In fine, I went on with my business as specified in the bills. Between the parts, to give the lady her due, she sang three songs, and then made her exit. A young man who was recommended to me, and, at his own request, was announced for three more, to be sure, at last, he came—gave one song—walked off—and

"I ne'er saw him more—but grieving's a folly."

I had often played *Solus* in the play, but now I was almost literally *solus*. I finished as well as I could, apologized to the company, at the same time telling them they were welcome to have half, or all their money returned if they pleased; this, however,

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they declined accepting and went away, leaving me much more dissatisfied than they appeared to be.

After this I had, unlooked-for, a private scholar for reading; sometimes I had two, sometimes a little writing to do, which I had strenuously applied for; sometimes received a favour. I was in this uncertain, half-living state, when, by the interest and exertions of my best friend and benefactor, whose name I reverence, yet fear to mention, he obtained the favour of many ladies and gentlemen of the first consequence in my behalf, by whose influence, and under whose patronage, I was granted a benefit in the Theatre on *Friday, January* 24, 1817. As I gave the cast of the play when I was concerned in a benefit in London, I shall, I hope, be excused, if on this occasion I give it as performed that night in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh:

THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

*Lord Ogleby,* EVERARD.
*Sir John Melvil,* Mr JONES.
*Lovewell,* Mr TRUEMAN.
*Sterling,* Mr CHIPPENDALE.
*Canton,* Mr MASON.
*Brush,* Mr W. MURRAY.

*Mrs Heidelberg,* Mrs NICOLL,
*Miss Sterling,* Mrs M'NAMARA.
*Betty,* Miss STANFIELD.
*Chambermaid,* Mrs MEGGETT.
*Miss Fanny Sterling,* Mrs H. SIDDONS.

*To which was added, the Drama, in three acts, called*
THE PORTFOLIO.

On this occasion, there were fourteen whole boxes taken; in cash and tickets nearly forty-two

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pounds in them. The pit and galleries bore no proportion to the boxes, there not being in them eighteen pounds; the whole amount nearly sixty pounds; my charges to the manager thirty pounds; additional bills upon my own account, 700 tickets, advertisements, and some trifling expenses, came to above five pounds more. I was particularly happy at seeing the boxes so elegantly filled, as well as at the receipt of the house, which, however, I am confident would have been much better, but that for some days previous to my benefit, the weather had been so wet, and I was so indisposed, that many respectable persons I could not wait upon as I intended. I have known people who designed to come, stay away merely on this account, thinking themselves slighted and treated disrespectfully. The play was well performed, (if I may be allowed to say so, who played a principal character;) at any rate, it was well received. But respecting myself, I must say, that in spite of myself, and in spite of my best efforts, I must acknowledge, that I *did* not, *could* not play *Lord Ogleby* that night as well as I did in London. It may be asked, "as I wished and exerted myself to do so, why not?" I can assign the following causes:—1st, Since I had performed it in London, I had gone down more into "the vale of years;" I was twelve older: "yet that's not much;" no, not to a young man of two-and-twenty; but I was at that time turned of fifty, and twelve more laid on me could not, at least, be in my favour. 2dly, At Drury I was engaged,—the house, the company, familiar to me; most of them concerned with me in the play there I had known for many years, some from childhood; here, supposing the performers of equal merit, I was a *stranger* to them. This may seem of very little consequence in the eyes of the



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public, but the actor sensibly feels it makes a material disadvantage to him. 3dly, In Drury, I had two rehearsals of the play; here, where, from the above reasons, I had but one; though, I do not doubt, had I requested two, but it might have been complied with. 4thly, The character of *Lord Ogleby* requires more good stage properties than almost any character I know. When in Drury, I had nearly enough of these, and without which the best dressed suit of clothes would look ridiculously. What I wanted, I could freely have borrowed, too, thrice over, from an elegant sword to a snuff-box, from a gold watch to a wig, from a "Ribband to a Raphael;" but wanting most of these here, and being a stranger, afraid to try to borrow, in consequence of this deficiency, although unperceived by the audience, I so sensibly felt it, that I was the whole night as uncomfortable, as uneasy and fidgety, as a gentleman would be in an Assembly-room, having just missed his gloves and handkerchief, and then perceived a large hole in his silk stocking. This, after all, is only saying, that my inclination to please a polite and generous audience, was much stronger than my abilities, under such disadvantages, so cramped, could possibly reach. In fact, it is only saying that I was so thoroughly sensible of the great kindness, exertions, and generosity of my patrons and friends on this occasion, and the warm applause they bestowed on me all through the character, as a testimony of their satisfaction, that I regret I laboured under a combination of such seemingly trifling disadvantages, which, *together*, prevented me from better deserving it.

As I had now been in Edinburgh ten months, and in such circumstances, it cannot be wondered at that I should be involved. I was truly happy that

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the profits of this benefit enabled me to pay and clear my way, for indeed every one was expecting it. When this was done, I thought to take my passage for London, as I saw, with concern, there was no likelihood of my attaining any settlement in Edinburgh. The severity of the season, but more particularly my wife's illness, prevented my undertaking it. She was dangerously ill; severely afflicted with an alarming sore throat. Dr Ross lanced it. A gentleman, my greatest friend, caused me to owe him another obligation, by recommending me to his care and attention, with Dr George Bell, to the advice and assistance of whom, even up to this day, my wife providentially stands indebted for the prolongation of her life.

A few weeks after my benefit, I gave out twice at Mr M'Ewan's; but whether on account of the very disagreeable weather at that time, or whether the disappointment of my first attempt there had left a bad impression, which was not yet erazed, I know not; but I did not perform. The expences hereby incurred was a serious loss. Hearing by chance that the Hon. Henry Erskine was then in town, I wrote to, and waited on him. He told me that he had not that interest now in Edinburgh, as he had years ago, when his brother, Lord Erskine, wrote to him in my behalf, but that if he could serve me he would, and desired me to leave him my address. When I called again, he said that he had given it to a friend of his in the Register-house, and made no doubt but I should hear from him, or see him, in a day or two. Hearing nothing of this for a week, I waited again on him, but was informed that he had the day before left Edinburgh for his country seat, where he very shortly after—left the world! I had, besides, other prospects in view,

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and other hopes and half-promises held out to me, from time to time, of getting a situation, or some employment for my pen, " but in vain ! I was beat through every quarter of the compass !"

In the interim, I gave out two nights in Laurie's Rooms, Clyde Street,—did not perform on either—the last night a guinea was paid for the room, though I did nothing; eight shillings I paid for lights, with bills, and other expences; this again was " loss upon loss !" I then, some time after, had the favour of Mr Oman's hotel room. Here I performed to a very genteel company—delivered every thing as specified in the bill—danced—and had great reason to believe that I gave general satisfaction. This was the only time that my attempt by myself met with success. I was asked to be there the next night by Dr Duncan, when a numerous party of gentlemen were to dine there. I attended—gave a few recitations, and was rewarded by Dr Duncan.

Some time after, (about seven months) interest being made for me, I was again granted a benefit in the theatre, which I hope I shall be excused from giving the cast of here, as it may perchance be gratifying to some of my readers in England.

Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh.

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On Tuesday, April the 14th, 1818, the Comedy of

SPEED THE PLOUGH.

*Sir Abel Handy,* EVERARD.
*Sir Philip Blandford,* Mr ANDERSON.
*Bob Handy,* Mr JONES.—*Henry,* Mr E. CROOK.
*Farmer Ashfield,* Mr CHIPPENDALE.
*Morrington,* Mr DOBBS.



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*Lady Handy*, Miss DECAMP.
*Susan Ashfield*, Miss DYKE.
*Dame Ashfield*, Mrs NICOL.
*Miss Blandford*, Mrs DOBBS.

With the AGREEABLE SURPRIZE.
*Sir Felix Friendly*, EVERARD.
*Compton*, Mr DOBBS.—*Eugene*, Mr E. CROOK.
*Lingo*, Mr RUSSELL.

*Laura*, Miss DYKE.—*Mrs Cheshire*, Mrs NICOL.
*Cowslip*, Mrs CUMMINS.

I had again elegant company in the boxes, but not nearly so numerous as before, nor had I indeed a right to expect it; three ladies, too, who interested themselves greatly for me last year, "had for ever bid adieu to transitory things." The receipt of the house was now only L.41, 14s. Last year, nearly L.60. Then, being on a Friday night, my charges were no more than L.30; this year, on a Tuesday, L.35. So, in fine, my charges were now five pounds more, and my receipt above L.18 less, a difference of more than L.23! "Well, travellers must be content." I confess that I am so contented, or rather indeed so tired of my travels, though they have been confined within a very small compass, that I wish to have no more of them. But that is not likely to be the case; I see no prospect of my journey's end—no probability of a quiet rest for my few remaining days—no likelihood of my obtaining a settlement on earth, untill (mother like) she embraces me with open arms, and affords me a peaceful, silent, long, last asylum. Two months before I had this benefit, and now three months since, by the advice and encouragement of my best friends, I have been employed, with an anxious

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mind and fearful hand, in calling to remembrance, and in writing these trifling Memoirs, which, with the most profound respect, I beg leave to present to your notice. I most sensibly feel that it is my dernier resort—my last resource—my only means—my only alternative and hope of procuring a bit of bread for myself and wife, for the short time we shall be allowed to trouble the world. If my wife, now breathing her native air, should chance to be the longest liver, as, notwithstanding her almost constant ailments, perhaps she may, in that case, it may possibly procure *her* a morsel, when I no longer can personally assist her. With the warmest, sincerest, deepest sense of gratitude for the numberless favours I have received, once more I hope that this trifle may obtain your approbation and support; submissively, I commit myself to your kind consideration, and, with becoming confidence, rely upon your clemency and candour, your humanity and generosity.

FINIS.

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